

The Goblin Kingdom

ゴブリンの王国

王の生誕 I

春野隠者

illustration

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Goblin Kingdom

– Goblin no Oukoku –

- Volume 2 - The Distant Paradise (Second Half)

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[Neo Translations]



ゴブリン・ノーマル



ゴブリン・レア



ゴブリン・ノブール



ゴブリン・デューク





ゴブリン

緑色の肌に醜い容姿の化け物。同種族の雌雄でも生殖するが、人間の女性を襲って生殖することもある。生まれてからの成長速度は早い。



ゴブリン・レア

ノーマル級のゴブリンよりも一回り大きく、赤い肌に凶悪な風貌を持つ。身体能力や知能が上昇し、言葉を話すことも可能になっている。



ゴブリン・ノーブル

レア級よりもさらに大きくなり、青い肌と赤い瞳を持つ。血の色は青く変化している。武器の扱いにも長け、知能もさらに上昇し、言葉も流暢に話す。



ゴブリン・デューク

肌の色は茶色くなり、顔には一本角が生えている。長く伸びる黒い髪に、銅のように鍛えられた肉体は美しさすら感じる。その瞳は凶暴な意志を湛えている。



ゴブリン・ドルイド

「祭祀」とも呼ばれる、魔法に長けたゴブリン。赤黒い肌で、ゴブリンには似つかわしくない瘦身長躯。相貌も人間に近い雰囲気がある。



コボルト

ゴブリンよりも下位にある種族。小型犬のような容姿で、ノーマルゴブリンよりも小さい。獣の死肉を漁って生きている。



グレイウルフ

成体は体長2メートル(メートル)を超える大きさになる。名前の通り、灰色の体毛。眷族として茶色い毛並みの狼を引き連れている。



オーク

醜悪な豚の頭に牙を生やした姿は威圧感がある。通常のオークは棍棒などの鈍器を使うが、階級が上がると槍も振る。鼻は臭いを嗅ぎ分けるらしい。



レシア・フェル・ジール

ゴブリンの集落に近付き、捕らえられた人間の女性。癒しの女神ゼノビアの信徒。

INTERMISSION

POSITIONING

Status	
Race	Gi Jii
Level	86
Class	Rare
Possessed Skills	Overpowering Howl; Sword Mastery C-; Wide-Open Eyes; Omnivorous; Appeal
Divine Protection	None
Attributes	None

The assassin, Gi Ji Arsil, left the demihuman village as the king's messenger. As this was the second time he left for the Fortress of the Abyss, it took him only three days to reach it. He had already gotten used to the route. Moreover, there were trails left behind, which he could follow.

Gi Ji Arsil arrived at the fortress safely and asked for an audience with the knight class, Gi Ga Rax, who was responsible for the fortress in the king's absence.

"The king wants more soldiers to be sent to the demihuman village," Gi Ji Arsil said.

Gi Ga was as focused on training the goblins as ever. From time to time, he would glance sharply at the goblins swinging their spears.

"How many does the king need?" Gi Ga Rax asked.

"The king didn't say, though I suppose as much goblins as it would take to secure a foothold," Gi Ji Arsil replied.

"In that case, the king will probably need enough goblins to work his way from the village into the west. There should still be some time until the battle with the humans, but..."

Gi Ga worried that the king might have forgotten about the threat to the east. The

words of the humans – not to mention, the words of the enemy – could not be trusted. The king must surely have his considerations, however.

If only they disciplined the kobolds better, they could put them to better use, but unfortunately, the king did not wish to. To go against the king's word was to err as his retainer, therefore, Gi Ga could only count the soldiers he would need to send.

"80 goblins," Gi Ga Rax said. "To respond to the king's command with our utmost effort is our duty."

"That many?" Gi Ji Arsil was shocked.

"Lord Rashka of the Gaidga should be able to send another 40. Lord Aluhaliha of Paradua and Princess Narsa of the Ganra should both be able to send another 10 each. We'll need a day's time to prepare everyone," Gi Ga Rax added.

"The king will be glad," Gi Ji Arsil said.

"Gi Ji Arsil, there is something I wish to ask of you," Gi Ga Rax said.

"What is it?"

"Would you scout the east?"

"The east... You mean the orcs?"

"There are orcs too, yes, but I'm more interested in the humans. I find it hard to believe that they would be willing to withdraw just like that. The king seems to trust the humans' words, but..."

"Are you sure you're not just thinking too much?"

Ga Rax shook his head. "I don't mean to doubt the words of the king, but... our enemy is human. Against them, there is no such thing as too much preparation. A defeat like before won't be forgiven again. This is our home. If we lose it, we will have no home left to return to."

Gi Jii Arsil nodded. "I understand. Fortunately, the king has asked me to stay here for a while."

“Thank you. I’ll leave it in your hands.”

After asking Gi Ji Arsil to scout, Gi Ga Rax left to pick out the goblins. 140 goblins all-in-all would be sent. Such a large horde would require a proportionate amount of food to sustain it. Gi Ga Rax asked the Gordob goblin in charge of the food to calculate how much would be needed, while he sent the Paradua messengers to send word to the tribes.

Like this Gi Ga Rax quickly gathered the goblins. All that was left was to appoint a leader over the horde.

“Did the king mention who would be leading?” Gi Ga Rax asked.

“No, he didn’t mention anyone in particular,” Gi Ji Arsil said.

Gi Ga groaned as he became thoughtful. The fact that the king didn’t name anyone was proof that he trusted him. He had to answer to that trust.

The noble classes Gi Gu Verbena, Gi Go Amatsuki (Sword God), Gi Gi Orudo (Ancient Beast Tamer), Gi Zu Ruo (Shishi) have all been sent out to expand the horde, and Gi Ga Rax himself was responsible for the fortress. If a leader over this horde were to be appointed, it would have to be a rare class.

—When you think about class, Lord Rashka of the Gaidga seems most appropriate, but with such a large horde, perhaps the First Archer of the Gadieta, Lord Gilmi Fishiga, would be a better pick. Lord Aluhaliha of the Paradua wouldn’t be bad either.

But every one of them is a chieftain of their tribe.

—Would it really be alright to send them?

Gi Ga could not come to a conclusion. He wished Gi Zo was around. That goblin was particularly knowledgeable in all fields even among the druids.

Gi Da wouldn’t be bad either. He was plenty strong and was even skilled at the spear. It was truly regrettable that they passed so young.

“What am I doing?” Gi Ga grimaced.

Wait, wasn't there someone? Someone particularly skilled at leading?

"Is Gi Jii around?" Gi Ga muttered.

It was convenient having Gi Jii around, who was trained by Gi Gu himself, but if Gi Ga was to send someone to safely lead a horde of over a hundred goblins, there was no goblin more fit for the job.

"You needed something?" Gi Jii asked after being called.

The way the goblin stood as he wore his sword by his waist and his armor over his body spoke of his experience as a warrior. Gi Ga felt at ease as soon as he saw him.

"If you have an order for me, I will fulfill it," Gi Jii said.

After appointing Gi Jii as the leader of the horde, Gi Ga decided to run him through a quick training course.

To cover Gi Jii's weaknesses, he asked the newly evolved rare goblins Gi Bi (Water Mage), Gi Bu (Beast Tamer), and the one-armed Gi Be to go with him.

He called all of them out and ran them through a quick course.



While the goblin king went out to meet with the chief of the werewolves, the chief of the centaurs, Daizos, went back to his tribe.

Daizos felt guilty using Mido to delay the goblin king, but he needed to inform the people staying in his village of the threat looming over his tribe.

"Is Lord Cecil and Lord Shunan in?" Daizos asked.

The centaur did not even have the time to clean himself before urgently requesting an audience with the people staying in the centaur village.

The centaurs were prominent even among the demihumans. One reason behind that was because of their race's natural gift in fighting. Their male and their females could

all fight in battle without discrimination. Moreover, much of their knowledge had been successfully passed down throughout the generations. They also lived the closest to the elves. That in and of itself was proof of their strength.

With such a proud history behind their race, Daizos would naturally not be the kind of man who would easily bow his head to someone.

“Let him in,” a voice said from inside the biggest building in the village.

It was usually meant for the chief to live in, but right now, it was being used as a guest house.

As Daizos timidly entered, two people came to view.

Either one of them was beautiful. One was in the prime of his life, while the other was relatively young. These were people sent by the elves.

The older of the two elves frowned when he saw Daizos’ unkempt appearance. Sensing his displeasure, the younger one spoke before he could.

“What’s the matter? Why are you in such a hurry?” The younger one asked.

“Lord Shunan, actually...” Daizos, on his knees, began to say, but the older of the two elves interjected.

“What’s the matter, Daizos? Is that how you choose to present yourself before the proud elves?” The older elf said as he glared at the younger elf, Shunan, reminding him which of them had the right to speak.

“Please excuse me for my unsightly appearance, Lord Cecil, but the situation requires that I inform you posthaste.”

Hmph, Cecil sneered as he looked condescendingly at the kneeling Daizos.

“What is the matter?” Cecil asked.

“Please escape the village as soon as you can,” Daizos said.

“What? What’s going on?” Cecil’s beautiful brows rose.

“All the other tribes except for the centaurs and the fangs have been tricked by the goblins. They will be attacking soon.”

Silence filled the room. The elves could not comprehend.

“...Goblins?” Cecil asked.

“Yes, the goblin king from the east—” Daizos tried to explain, but...

“Fool! Are you thinking straight!?” Cecil exploded.

Unfortunately, Daizos well-intentioned advice was met with disdain.

“But,” the younger of the two, Shunan, tried to reason, but unfortunately, Cecil would have none of it. In fact, he even turned his anger to the younger elf.

“Lord Shunan, surely you couldn’t possibly be saying that you believe this nonsense?” Cecil said as he glared hatefully and refused to listen to anyone. “A goblin, Lord Shunan? A goblin. What are goblins? They are vulgar, coarse, and dirty! Do you honestly believe such—things could actually trick the demihumans and stage an attack on us?”

Unable to release his anger with his words alone, Cecil stood up from his chair and walked over to the kneeling Daizos.

“Do you take me for a fool? Hmm?” Cecil spat. “If you intended to weasel your way out of paying your due taxes, it would have been better if you said the humans attacked instead!”

“I have no such—” Daizos tried to reason.

“I will hear no excuses!” Cecil spat before taking his seat again. “Because I will not be leaving until you pay your dues.”

Shunan frowned at Cecil’s outburst.

“...I understand. Please excuse me,” Daizos said.

Cecil sneered as he watched Daizos left depressed.

“Wasn’t that too much? Even they are struggling. Moreover, it isn’t as if the taxes they pay are compulsory. They only pay out of gratitude,” Shunan said.

Cecil sneered. “If I may remind you, Lord Shunan, I, Lord Cecil, am chief envoy, whereas you are merely vice-envoy.”

“I am aware, however—”

“If you know, then please keep your opinions to yourself. Just because your older brother is now a member of the council doesn’t mean you have the right to interfere in my duties.”

“My apologies. I did not intend to poke my nose where it does not belong, but at this rate—”

“The demihumans are no more than tenants. It is only right that they pay their rent.”

“Lord Cecil, that is going too far.”

Hmph, Cecil sneered.

Sighing quietly to himself, Shunan stood up and left the house.

“Where are you going, Lord Shunan?” Cecil asked.

“I’m going to take a walk outside,” Shunan replied.

“Hmph, nothing will change even if you flatter those demihumans.”

Shunan pretended he didn’t hear Cecil’s last comment as he went out to follow Daizos.



“Lord Daizos,” Shunan called out.

Daizos was hurriedly ordering his men when Shunan called out.

“Lord Shunan,” Daizos said as he quickly knelt. Please excuse my earlier behavior.”

“Please don’t apologize, Lord Daizos,” Shunan said. “If anything, it should be me apologizing. I hope you can forgive Lord Cecil’s outburst.”

“It’s alright, Lord Shunan. I understand full well how ridiculous my story was. It’s just that...”

“It’s true, isn’t it?”

“Yes. That goblin was cunning. He used the threat of the humans to rouse our sense of crisis, and then he tricked us with his words and his strength.”

“You mentioned he came from the east... Weren’t the orcs living in the east?”

Daizos was in awe of the young man’s knowledge. Truly, the elves were worthy of their respect. They were not aware only of matters concerning them, but even of matters far away. Moreover, the fact that the elves knew meant that they cared. To Daizos nothing could be more reassuring.

“They did live in the east, but... Lately, the orcs haven’t been appearing. It’s possible the goblins might have annihilated them,” Daizos said.

“They’re that formidable?” Shunan said in surprise. Though calm, there was a hint of fear mixed in his words.

“Please rest assured, we will surely protect you and Lord Cecil.”

“Don’t push yourselves too much though. After all, you could always hand us over to the other descendants of the crystals.”

“Absolutely not, Lord Shunan. How could we possibly let the goblins have you? If such a thing were to happen, we would no longer be able to face our ancestors.”

“Anyway, I’m sorry for bothering you while you’re busy. If there’s anything I can do to help, please just say it.”

“It’s alright. Please rest well.”

At Daizos' urging, Shunan went back to his lodging.

"If worse comes to worse, I shall use my life to protect you," Daizos muttered to himself.

Like this the centaurs readied themselves for battle.



King Ashtal sat in his office, where all the unnecessary things often used for formalities' sake have been cleared out.

He spoke alone with another man.

"The scarlet maiden... She's gotten quite popular, hasn't she?"

Ashtal Do Germion, the man who stood at the apex of Kingdom Germion's army. He happily nodded as he read the reports.

"Yes, the adventurers did a good job spreading her name," the iron-armed knight, Gowen Ranid, said.

Ever since the defeat in the forest, these two men have been getting closer. They both knew the gravity of that defeat. Hence, they also understood that they needed to work together if they were to overcome this new threat.

Gowen rarely went to the capital in the past, but ever since his defeat in the forest, he has been proactively approaching the king. The situation at hand had forced him to.

Once a war with the monsters broke out, he would immediately have to borrow soldiers from the capital. He could fight solely with the soldiers he has at hand, but such a stand would surely not last.

The goblins are infamous for their high birth rate. They are known to kidnap the females of other races, impregnating them to increase their numbers. Because of that Gowen had sent out a proclamation restricting women from frolicking outside. Patrols were also increased. It took a lot of effort just to spot the beasts that would come out the forest from time to time.

“When will she be ready?” The king asked.

He was referring to the scarlet maiden.

“She has earned much fame in the north already, so the next would either be the west or the south,” Gowen said.

Ashtal played with the feather pen on his hands as he became thoughtful.

“Have her go the south then. Send her to the Ripper Knight. Put a leash on her while you’re at it, a sweet-tasting leash.

It was necessary to have a failsafe on the knights of the country.

“We can start with her family. Start gathering info on them,” Ashtal said.

“Alright,” Gowen said.

Ashtal’s gaze grew sharper as he tried to measure Gowen’s depths.

“Just that won’t be enough, however.”

“Yes, it would be a great help if you would allow the construction of a colonial city.”

“Colonia, huh.”

The colonial cities are focal points of conquest. In times of war, they could be used as fortresses. In times of peace, they could be used for political maneuvering. They are essentially tools of conquest, but the cost behind them was proportional to their power.

It was those colonial cities that Gowen had requested of the king. King Ashtal closed his eyes once again. The threat from the west, Gowen’s strength and his loyalty... There were many things that needed to be weighed.

The existence of a wise monster as well. If Gowen’s words were to be believed, this was past the point of a mere subjugation request.

A war between man and monster.

“...Very well. Fortunately, the Storm Knight, Gulland, has returned, so we have the advantage. For a brief time, we can restrain our offensive maneuverings. The Ripper Knight has done a good job filling in for Gene’s absence in the south too.”

Everything was under the assumption that the Holy Shushunu Kingdom to the east remained friendly.

Time was needed before they would be able to suppress the bandits to the north. The hole left by the death of the Lightning-Fast Knight was somehow filled in by the Ripper Knight’s fervorous activities. If there was ever a time to take a breather, it was now.

“Start preparing for a war to the west. We’ll take down those monsters,” King Ashtal said.

When workers are needed, the economy will kick in. As a result, people will gather and taxes will rise. If you use war as a pretense, even soldiers can be used.

Ashtal decided to accept Gowen’s multifaceted plan. The soldiers would have no rest in the coming construction, but that was fine. There was little point in repeating the same training over and over anyway.

Once more, the humans stretched out their hands in pursuit of the forests’ wealth.

CHAPTER 116

DUTY

The fang tribe had successfully been annexed.

As soon as the elder agreed, Mido agreed as well. I commented on his lack of individuality and he replied, "I know I'm inexperienced, so it is best to let the elder decide everything. Now that he has reconciled with you, I have too."

It was my first time seeing a chief utilize his subordinates in this way. Apparently, different tribes have different preferences for leaders. Interesting.

Speaking of interesting, Cynthia accomplished a lot today. It was thanks to her that the fang tribe could reconcile with me. If she wants Mido as an ally, then I'll have to acquiesce.

I'll just have them pay me back by working them to the bones.

Gi Ji Arsil managed to accomplish his mission without fail.

140 goblins stood before me. Most of them were from the Gi Village, but there were also some from the tribes.

Leading them was Gi Jii. Impressive how he was able to control this large of a horde.

"Well done, Gi Jii," I said.

"I am happy to serve the king," he replied. "It wasn't just me, however, the others helped too."

It seems the goblins from the tribes helped out. Dashka of Gaidga gathered the goblins with strength, Ru Rou of Ganra scouted, and Hal of Paradua protected the goblins falling by the wayside and acted as messengers.

Aside from having a leader to bring various hordes together, it seems it's also necessary to have people to help that leader.

Dashka, Ru Rou, Hal, every single one of these goblins were elite. What an unexpected blessing. I expected a lot to come, but I didn't think there would be so many young elites.

I called out to the three goblins kneeling behind Gi Jii.

"Dashka of Gaidga, I look forward to fighting with you," I said.

"Ha!" He replied.

"Ru Rou, work well so as to not let your village down. You did well today," I said.

"Thank you, Your Highness," Ru Rou replied.

"Hal, you have brought much glory to your name. The day when your name can stand alongside Aluahliha's doesn't seem far off," I said.

"Just matching my predecessor won't be enough. I intend to keep going," Hal replied.

After speaking to the three goblins, I turned back to Gi Jii.

"You did well today. Keep it up," I said.

"Yes, my king," Gi Jii replied calmly.

I smiled at that.

"...This many can't fit in the village," Nikea said behind me.

She seemed shocked at the number of goblins.

"It's fine. We can stay outside," I said.

I ordered Gi Jii to make camp.

Camping wasn't an issue, though of course, we still needed to pick a place that could shelter us from the wind and the rai, otherwise, we wouldn't be able to rest much.

“I will be staying with my subordinates. Just let me know when there’s a meeting,” I said.

“What!? But...” Nikea was flabbergasted.

“If my subordinates act poorly in any way, inform me. We will respect your laws, though with this many, I’ll have to trouble you about the food,” I added.

“Very well. I will open our reserves a little. If we go individually, it should take 5 days for us to reach the centaur village.”

There are plenty of goblins, so my horde will probably arrive a little later.

“We’ll probably take six days on our side. We’ll leave first thing in the morning tomorrow. What of the other descendants?”

“Lord Luther of the Shell Tribe, the Papirsag, has agreed. It seems your goblin horde was a bit too much of a threat. Lord Tanita of the Long-Tailed Tribe has yet to arrive at a decision, but I’m sure he will be joining as soon as he gets word of Lord Luther’s decision.”

The demihumans would definitely want to avoid getting the short end of the stick.

The issue right now is the army we will be rallying against the centaurs.

“Do you really plan on waging a war on the centaurs?” Nikea asked.

“But of course. If they surrender...”

If they surrender I won’t make them sign any conditions. We haven’t suffered any losses yet, so if they surrender early, I won’t demand anything unreasonable.

If they surrender early, that is.

“20 of our ranks will be joining you in battle. The mud-scaled tribe and the harpies will provide logistical support. The shell tribe will provide 10, and the long-tailed tribe will probably be able to provide at least 30. The fang tribe will also be able to provide 30. As for the minotaurs, unfortunately, they won’t be joining,” Nikea said.

“They won’t be joining?” I asked.

“They agreed to fight against the humans not the demihumans.”

Ah, a loop hole. And here I thought they were brainless.

We don’t have a slave-master relationship, so I guess I’ll have to let this one go.

“Fine. It was short noticed, after all,” I said.

“Sorry,” Nikea said.

“I’m not blaming you.”

I have no intentions of pushing everything onto Nikea. Opposition is to be expected. After all, I’m sure they’d want to avoid me monopolizing all of the authority.

Those who have been my subordinates for a long time like the goblins of the Gi Village might not mind, but the demihumans who have only just met me recently would surely find it hard to trust me.

Moreover, just supporting the food supplies of the current army is clearly no easy task. There are 140 goblins and 90 demihumans, that’s 230 all-in-all.

The werewolves and the gray wolves of the fang tribe are supposed to add more to that number to boot. Depending on how the centaurs fight, we could be the ones disadvantaged.

“What are the odds of the centaurs running to elven territory?” I asked.

It’s necessary to know exactly how far this battle can go. Otherwise, we might end up getting dragged around.

“...Can’t say it’s zero,” Nikea closed her eyes as she became thoughtful. “The home of the centaurs is to the west. They live closest to the elves, so...”

“If the battle goes to them, you won’t be able to fight since they’re your benefactors?”

Nikea wordlessly nodded.

“Then we’ll have to settle the battle before they can escape to the elven territory,” I said.

“We’ll have to take them from the back then. And then, on top of that, stop them in their tracks,” Nikea said.

Right. If we can do that, we can surround them.

They’ll probably surrender in that case.

“Have the fang tribe and the long-tailed tribe attack from the back. I will stop them,” I said.

“That’s a dangerous role, but...” Nikea shook her head. “So are the roles of the fang tribe and the long-tailed tribe. Let me take that role.”

For the sake of the future of the demihumans, Nikea volunteered to take on the dangerous role.

“Let’s have the mud-scaled tribe guide us to the centaur village.”

The overall plan has been decided. We’ll suppress the centaurs before they enter the elven region, surround them, and then force them into submission. If they refuse, well, we’ll just have to cut off their leader’s neck.

I’d rather not wipe them out though.

“The centaurs number 500 all-in-all, but about 400 of those can fight,” Nikea said.

That’s a lot. If they were human, that number would at least be halved because of the women and the children.

“Most of them are hunters and their women are just strong as their men.”

So everyone else except the elderly and the children are warriors.

Well, aren’t the goblins the same?

“We will be leaving tonight. Rukenon will take over if something happens to me. Let us hope nothing happens,” Nikea said.

As I nodded, Nikea turned and left.

We have to hurry. If we lose her, the araneae will fall into chaos.

I went through a lot of pain to secure this foothold. I can’t lose it now.

After giving detailed instructions to the mud-scaled tribe who would be leading the way, I went to sleep along with my subordinates.



Daizos sighed as he thought about Cecil’s refusal to leave. The tax he was asking was from all of the demihumans living in the region. Naturally, Daizos was unable to procure everything by himself.

It has become custom for the demihumans to offer their special goods as tax to the elves, though when exactly the envoys would come to pick up the tax was not set in stone.

Daizos originally intended to say something about the elves in the previous meeting, but because of the goblin’s sudden announcement, he lost his chance. It wasn’t just because of the goblin’s announcement, however, he also feared that the goblins might go after them.

In truth, the goblins would not have done such a thing, but Daizos saw the goblins as savages and the elves as nobles. The way he saw it, the elves mustn’t be exposed to even the slightest bit of danger.

Unfortunately, everything Daizos did only made his worst fears inch one step closer to reality.:w

After Daizos informed the bigwigs of his village of the goblins’ possible attack, they asked him where the other demihumans were. Daizos only said that the demihumans were now obeying the goblins.

The demihumans and the goblins might have been together under the pretense of a

united front against the humans, but as Daizos saw it, the demihumans have essentially been annexed. The person responsible for that was none other than Nikea.

The descendants who owned the lands farthest to the east. The same descendants who yearned for the lands the orcs ruled, that once proud tribe. Ever since Nikea became chief they changed, and now they have even colluded with the goblins.

He couldn't accept it.

But right now there was a more pressing issue: how could he send the elves home? If they stayed here, they would surely be caught in the war. No matter how much Daizos thought, he couldn't come up with a way to convince them to leave.

—What should I do?

“Chief.”

When he looked up, one of the young men of the village was before him.

“Dakitania, what's the matter?” Daizos asked, a little annoyed because his thoughts were disturbed.

“Forgive my frankness, but we can't win even if we defend.”

In response to that blunt statement, Daizos didn't explode in anger but instead bitterly smiled. Daizos was man enough to hear opinions contrary his own without getting mad.

“Indeed,” Daizos agreed. “Is that all you wanted to say?”

“No,” the young centaur said. “Since we'd lose defending, how about attacking?”

“Attack, huh.”

Daizos became thoughtful.

“We're fighting goblins, right? Then they'll probably try to overwhelm us with their numbers,” the young centaur added.

The goblins did use that tactic once. That was back when there were still goblins left around the village.

“The other descendants of the crystals will be fighting too. The araneae are the goblins’ allies,” Daizos said.

“Even then, I find it hard to imagine we’d lose a battle on the plains,” the young man said.

The fang tribe had similar patches of flatlands in their forests. Those patches of flatlands existed here too.

“We could meet the enemy in those places,” the young centaur said.

The odds of losing were indeed much smaller if they launched an offense on the plains.

“But the enemies are goblins. We’re dead if they catch us.”

“If the other descendants see their cruelty, I’m sure they’ll open their eyes.”

Daizos was shocked to hear the young centaur, Dakitania’s, words.

“You thought that far ahead, huh.”

“We are the most worthy to succeed Lord Gurfia’s will. That’s what I believe.”

The republic of the demihumans

Nikea was trying to use the goblins to make that a reality, but Dakitania would show them that the goblins were too dangerous to be trusted. They might die doing so, but it was worth it.

“Forgive me,” Daizos said. “I should be protecting you, and yet, here I am giving an order like this.”

Why? Daizos asked to the heavens. Why do the gods who created us, the god of wind and the god of earth, make us suffer so?

Daizos looked at the young centaur. “I order you, Dakitania, for the sake of our

benefactors, for the sake of our tribe, stop the invaders!”

“As you command, my chief. I will accomplish this duty even at the cost of my life.”

Dakitania buried his spear into the ground as he bowed deeply to Daizos.

CHAPTER 117

BATTLE ON THE MEADOWS

I split the horde into two. One was led by me, while the other I left in Gi Za Zakuend's hands.

The centaur village was situated west of the aranae village. Their houses were built with trees and animal hide, and they numbered almost 500. As a tribe, they are known for their hunting and their ability to process iron.

Orcs and goblins once lived near their village, but they drove them away. Daizos' grandfather is said to be a great warrior who slayed many goblins by himself.

The centaurs apparently traded their iron with the elves. That was one of the reasons why they were situated so closely to them.

The centaurs are renowned for hunting with their bows and spears. Their spears are said to be no weaker than a humans', and their bows are said to be the strongest among the demihumans.

The centaurs' unique skill was 'Herculean Strength'. When a centaur reached the chief class, the Herculean Strength skill would be able to bolster one's strength so much that he would be able to crush a rock crab barehanded.

"In other words, they are one annoying bunch," the youth of the mud-scaled tribe leading the way said.

It's been three days since we left, yet the youth's mouth showed no signs of stopping.

The members of the mud-scaled tribe were able to swim through dirt. Seeing this youth dig through the earth like it was swimming with only its head out really left one speechless.

"From here on there'll be tall grass everywhere, so please be careful. The centaurs are very near."

We've been moving on bare land all this time, so it was easy to see the mud-scaled youth, but in a place flourishing with tall grass, there's a chance we might lose sight of him.

Pushing aside the tall grass, we followed after the mud-scaled youth.

Well, this isn't so bad. As long as we pay attention, we should be alright.

"Gi Ba go scout the path ahead," I ordered.

Gi Ba left after bowing.

The tall grass blocked my vision, so I couldn't see what was up ahead. With the situation like this, I ordered the goblins to form three-man cells and scatter, paying careful attention to the surroundings.

We proceeded like that, while I made sure that no one strayed off. Halfway through the meadow, someone yelled from up ahead.

It was Gi Ba.

"Enemy!" He yelled.

Immediately, I drew my sword and ordered my men. "Secure the periphery! Take down anyone who comes!"

A centaur came and swung his spear. My sword clashed with his spear, and while I managed to flick it away, it was heavy. Saying that their spears were no less heavier than a human's was not an exaggeration.

The centaurs came one after another. Their bodies were big. The bottom part was horse, while the upper part was man. They were all either as big or bigger than me.

The centaur in front of me tried to kick me with his hooves, but I took a step back and swung my sword.

As our attacks passed by each other, the centaur turned around and disappeared into the sea of grass.

“Yell if you see an enemy approach!”

This land is a handicap, a big handicap

Plucking off one of the tall grass, I closed my eyes and thought of the worst possible outcome.

If a flaming arrow were to land in this sea of grass, where there were no plants or vegetation to wet the land, what would happen?

We would be a horde of sitting ducks in hell, that’s what.

I don’t know what they’re aiming for, but... It would be best to prepare for the worst.

After ordering the goblins to spread out, I wielded my sword again.

This terrain suits the centaur. We’re already halfway through the meadow. If we stop here, we’ll be sitting ducks for the enemy to pick off. Who would’ve thought the enemy would actually attack? We have to get out of here.

If we stop moving, the situation will only get worse.

Goblins and centaurs cried out alternately from the back.

Should we huddle up and move together, or would it be better to scatter and make a run for the meadow’s border?

“Split off into three man cells! Make a run for the meadow’s border!”

The enemy probably intends to stop us here. We need to avoid that at all costs. If we let things go as they want, the battle will eventually flow their way.

Even if it’s by force, we have to get back the initiative.

“Run for the border, but if anyone gets in your way, kill them!”

The main goal is to get out, but if you can take down someone along the way, then you might as well.

“Run!!”

At my command, goblins and araneae alike made a run for the border.



“What!? The goblins scattered?” The young leader of the centaur attack force, Dakitania, looked down on the battle from high ground. “Were they simply unable to endure our attacks, or are they aiming for something?”

Dakitania became thoughtful, but regardless how much he pondered, he couldn’t figure out what the enemy was thinking.

“...Let’s stop. There’s no way to figure out what the enemy is thinking. Besides, this isn’t a bad thing for us. Since they’re scattered, we’ll just pick them off!”

Dakitania drew his bow and shot an arrow to the sky.

“I’m going out! We’ll kill as many as we can.”

The arrow cried in the sky.

That was the signal for the centaurs hiding to make their move.

The excitement of the hunt filled Dakitania, drawing a smile on his lips. He rushed down from high ground and entered the meadows. There would be no order to this battle, but that didn’t matter. It was impossible for the centaurs to lose in a one-on-one battle against the goblins.

The angry voices of the goblins and the centaurs filled the land. At first, the centaurs seemed to have the upper hand, but as time went on, the screams of the centaurs grew more and more. Things did not go the way Dakitania hoped it would.

Dakitania thrust his spear in a hooking motion at the goblin he encountered, wounding the goblin’s shoulder.

“NUuoO!”

He followed up with a kick, but the goblin managed to dodge and even strike back.

Dakitania turned around and ran into the sea of grass. Something bitter filled his mouth.

He couldn't kill the goblin he encountered earlier either. They somehow managed to protect their vitals each time. Seeing the goblins move like that made Dakitania draw could sweat.

"This isn't how it was supposed to be!" He complained.

Because he was young he couldn't understand that he had made a mistake, so he went to look for another prey.

This time he found a red goblin accompanied by three others.

"A commander!? I'll be taking your neck!"

Dakitania thrust his spear at the red goblin.

"Attack when he's open," the red goblin said to a goblin near him. That goblin charged toward Dakitania.

"Impudent!" Dakitania spat.

On the red goblin's hands were a spear and a sword. The red goblin threw his spear at Dakitania, and then he lowered his body and charged toward Dakitania with his sword. The spear the red goblin threw was surprisingly accurate, so Dakitania had no choice but to block it with his spear.

"Naive!" The red goblin said as he swung his sword. Blood gushed out of Dakitania's side.

"Ku!"

Dakitania stifled the cry leaking out from his mouth. He had to recover himself and fight, but unfortunately for him, the three goblins had been waiting. They simultaneously charged at him. Fortunately, Dakitania managed to fend off their attack with a swing of his spear before disappearing into the sea of grass again.

Dakitania was drenched in his own blood. He looked around him as he ran through

the meadow, but the goblins didn't follow. He thought the goblins would be easy, but the goblins he fought just now made him drink his own blood.

"This is bad," Dakitania said.

Dakitania's plan was based on the presumption that centaurs wouldn't lose to goblins in a one-on-one fight. The fact that he was pushed this far meant that his presumption was wrong, meaning the very foundation which he formed his plan on was false.

Nocking his arrow, he shot twice to the sky.

"We have to retreat," he said.

If not, the goblins might just wipe them out. He didn't fear death, but he feared a meaningless death.

Just as he was about to leave the meadow, he happened upon a giant black goblin.

"Ah, just my luck..." Dakitania spat.

Calmly, he wielded his spear. The pressure emanating from that goblin was completely unlike that red goblin just now. A sword clad in black flames, three horns that stood in defiance of the heavens, and a tail that struck against the ground. The goblin before Dakitania looked so strong that he almost didn't look like a goblin.

"But I can't lose."

Dakitania kicked off the ground with all his strength and thrust his spear, but the black goblin easily dodged with a speed that left him shocked. Before he knew it, black flames were upon him.

The flames of the abyss cried for his death, and in one slash, Dakitania felt his life leave him.



After escaping the meadows, I checked our casualties, and I found out only 8 were wounded. No one died. In contrast, the enemy lost five of their own, and we even have a prisoner. As for the rest of the centaurs, they all ran.

Somehow, we managed to make it out of this predicament.

I tried talking to our prisoner, but he just wouldn't talk properly. He just kept spouting insults, calling us goblins savages.

"What a pain," I said, sighing.

"Umm... How about I give it a try?" Selena said.

"Alright, I'll have him travel with your group and the Araneae," I told her.

"Well, people being hostile isn't anything new," I muttered to myself.

I got depressed when I thought any future discussions with the centaurs might end up the same way. If that were to happen, I would have no choice but to thoroughly destroy them.

My lips curved into a smile as I thought of the carnage that would ensue.

No, I shook my head. The demihumans are watching my every move closely right now. I need to win their trust. There's no point in having them if they can't trust me with their life.

"Watch our prisoner," I said to a subordinate goblin before leaving to check on the wounded.

Goblins weren't the only ones who were injured. There were also araneae.

The wounded were being healed with secret medicine, but that secret medicine was actually no more than some herbs kneaded together. After being treated, those who could still walk were to walk back to the araneae village, while those who can't were to be carried by the Gaidga.

"We can leave anytime now, Your Majesty," a goblin said.

"Let's go then," I said.

The centaurs didn't move as expected. Were they trying to buy time? Or were they

really thinking of fighting us head on? Whichever it is, there were centaurs who managed to run away. They will be reporting the result of this skirmish.

I have no idea what they wanted to accomplish with so few men, but...

“So long as we crush them, all the problems will end.”

Time was of the essence.

After dealing with the wounded, I ordered my subordinates to move at full speed.



Level has risen.

45 => 48

CHAPTER 118

LOST PATH

The shaman, Gi Za Zakuend, stifled his yawn as he looked at the empty path ahead. He thought for sure the enemy would attack them, but no one came. That being the case, his attention naturally went to the demihumans traveling with him.

“I thought for sure they’d attack us instead of the king. Hmm... maybe they really are trying to run away,” Gi Za muttered.

Gi Za has been studying the araneae’s skill since they arrived at the araneae village. What properties does it have? How is it woven? Gi Za dragged Selena with him to ask those questions, and the araneae could not say no. Every one of them diligently answered his questions. Because of that Gi Za managed to spend his days immersed in his research. But now he was having some doubts about this expedition.

The king expected the enemy to run, but from Gi Za’s interactions with the araneae, there were unexpectedly few araneae who were as wise as Nikea. Most of them seemed to detest the goblins, finding them beneath them. The other demihumans probably felt the same. If so, then the centaurs would be most likely to attack than to run.

But contrary to Gi Za’s expectation, the enemy didn’t come. Perhaps they attacked the king’s horde instead, but there was nothing to worry about, as the king would easily be able to subjugate them.

There were roughly 80 goblins and demihumans following Gi Za. Gi Jii was his assistant, but the mission of delivering this horde to the centaurs’ doorsteps fell on him.

They had split the horde because there were just too many of them to easily traverse the forest, but in the end, there were still too many. Gi Za sighed.

The rizarat and the werewolves had already gone ahead as their mission was to keep the centaurs from running away.

Accompanying Gi Za were the shell tribe, the Papirsags led by Luther. Luther was not walking on his own legs and was instead riding on a beast, a turtle four times the size of a goblin.

The ancient beast warrior, Gi Gi Orudo, looked with envy at Luther's mount. It was supposedly a turtle, but it moved quite fast. The ivies growing on its body seemed to be aiding its movements. Gi Za's eyes dazzled as he looked with curiosity at those ivies.

Sensing his gaze, Luther moved up to the middle of the horde beside Gi Za.

"Is something the matter?" He bluntly asked.

Gi Za honestly nodded. "I'm interested in that turtle. Or more specifically, those ivies. Why is it helping the turtle move? Is it magic? A magic we goblins do not know of, or perhaps... a skill. If it's none of these, then I would truly appreciate it if you could enlighten me! In fact, if you don't mind, I'd appreciate it if you could also tell me about the other demihumans or perhaps even the magic of the elves!"

Before Luther knew it, Gi Za had already climbed up his turtle.

Gi Za's fervor for the unknown left Luther's mouth open.

"H-How about you ask one at a time first," Luther said.

"Alright," Gi Za agreed.

If the generals act cordially toward each other, it's only natural that the subordinates would follow suit, so it should come as no surprise when the curious goblins mustered their courage to strike up a conversation with the demihumans. At first, both parties were awkward, but gradually, the goblins and the demihumans warmed up to each other.

"What? Your beasts eat meat, while you eat grass!?" Dashka of Gaidga was shocked.

The demihumans apparently ate grass, while the beasts they tamed ate meat.

"Hey, is it true that goblins can see in the dark?" A demihuman asked.

"That's right. In fact, it's actually better for me to use my bow in the night than in the

day. The chiefs don't seem to care though. My concentration is still lacking," Ru Rou of Ganra said.

The only one who seemed troubled was Gi Jii, who had to follow the demihuman of the mud-scaled tribe.



The centaurs returned to their village defeated. When Daizos heard their report and found out that Dakinia had died, he went back to his room after calming down the others, then he quietly cried by himself.

"Chief!" A centaur yelled as he hurriedly entered Daizos' room.

His house was being lent out to the elves, so the house he was using now was borrowed from another centaur. Daizos' brows raised up when he heard the report of the centaur.

"Nikea came?" Daizos took his spear and exited his room to meet Nikea.

"...You dare show your face?" He said to Nikea..

Daizos' anger was almost past its boiling point. It seemed like he was barely able to keep himself from thrusting his spear into her.

"I came to talk, but... I see. Since you didn't come from your house, then that must mean...." Nikea said.

Despite arrows and Daizos' spear being pointed at her, Nikea was as calm as spring rain.

"This is troubling. At this rate, the elves will be caught up in the war," Nikea said.

"This is your fault!" Daizos yelled.

Contrast to Nikea's composure, Daizous was fuming.

"I intended to talk about the elves at the meeting, but you had to go and invite some goblin! Because of you the meeting was a mess. Form an alliance to fight the humans?"

Bullshit! You should've known there's no way we would fight with some goblin!" DAizos yelled.

"Why?" Nikea asked. "Do you intend to say that it's because they're savages?"

"Isn't that obvious? Because of them..."

Daizos couldn't say the words after that. That was probably because of his pride as chief. The one who ordered the centaurs to attack was none other than him, after all. Not to mention, blaming the goblins for their defeat would only shame the dead.

Somehow somehow Daizos managed to calm his seething anger and thrust his spear into the ground.

"Lord Daizos," Nikea said but the words wouldn't come out. Resolving herself, she opened her mouth again, repeating what she said a while ago. "...Let's talk. Lord Daizos, the elves must not be caught in this war. We should still be able to..."

"What right do you have to say that!? Araneae! Was it not you who colluded with the goblins!?" Daizos pulled out his spear and ordered his people. "Lock her up! But don't hurt her. We are the proud centaurs, act accordingly."

Afterwards, Daizos locked himself in his room again.

He pondered on Nikea's words.

"I..."



We moved onwards, going as fast as we could while keeping wary of our surroundings. Nikea is bound to encounter trouble as she's tasked with keeping the centaurs from running. Therefore, we need to quickly surround the centaurs and lighten the load on her and the rest of the advance group.

Despite our efforts to stay on guard, however, the centaurs never attacked again.

Are they not coming?

The goblins are positioned on all directions. With how fast we're going, the goblins are bound to be get tired. The elf, Selena, talked to the centaur, but while the centaur didn't spit out insults, he never said anything either.

It's also possible he just doesn't know anything.

"Boss, aren't, we going, too fast?" Shumea asked, huffing and puffing.

When I turned around, the normal class goblins were similarly exhausted.

Can't be helped, we have to go slower.

—Damn it, am I agitated? Me?

I finally managed to find a partner, and yet now, I'm about to lose her. She asked for it herself, I know, but... Should have I stopped her?

Uneasiness burned in my chest as I looked up ahead. Please be safe, I prayed.

I don't think she's one to do anything rash.

But, still. I don't think the enemy is going to act as we expect. They already ambushed us back in the meadows, so they must have something under their sleeves.

"Boss, can I have a moment?" Shumea asked.

"What?" I said.

It wasn't my intention, but my words came out brusque.

Shumea clicked her tongue at the way I talked.

"I don't think it'll help even if I tell you not to hurry, but how about changing your perspective?" Shumea said.

Change my perspective?

"Isn't the reason you're worried about that demihuman pretty much because you doubt her strength?" Shumea pointed out.

I see... But still.

“You wrote this script with her, right? Then all you have to do is play it out. Worrying won’t help, so cheer up,” Shumea said with a laugh.

Somehow, her words calmed me down.

“...Now that you mention it,” I said.

“Right, right,” she said.

It seems my panicking also affected the other goblins.

Taking a deep breath, I slowed down my pace.

“As expected of you, Boss,” Shumea said.

“Thank you. I’ll be counting on you again if anything happens,” I said.

“It would be great if you could just say thank you a bit more kindly though,” she said.

Does it matter if I speak kindly? Maybe she’s just making fun of me. Regardless, I could only click my tongue in response.

Two days later, we arrived at the centaur village.

Contrary my expectations, the centaurs fortified their defenses and readied themselves for battle.



Just when she thought she would be able to leave the tower, she was told to go to the office of domestic affairs.

Reshia was furious at those orders, but despite that she didn’t show her displeasure. If only the goblin king were here, she could complain as much as she wanted to him, and it wouldn’t be pointless.

As for why...

“He won’t get mad, he won’t be agitated, he’ll even ask for my opinion on all sorts of matters, and when it’s time to act, he’ll act quickly,” Reshia quietly grumbled to herself.

Eventually, it occurred to her that she couldn’t think of a single bad side to the goblin king.

“Sigh... this isn’t good. It’s said that only the good times will be remembered, but...” As Reshia sighed, she thought of that figure who stretched out his hand and tried to save her.

“I’m sure he’s alive.”

Lifting up her head, she looked at the gaudy door made of gold and silver.

Thinking to herself of how ostentatious the door was, Reshia opened the door.

“Oh, if it isn’t the saint. Thank you for coming.”

Inside the room was a fat man who made the chair he sat on seem small. This was none other than the lord in charge of the office of domestic affairs. A man who was promoted solely due to his status as count.

The man’s eyes followed Reshia’s neckline down to her chest as he brushed her waist gently without reservation.

Goosebumps broke out all over Reshia.

“Please enter,” the man said.

There was a guard by the door, so it should be safe. Thinking that, Reshia sat down on the sofa, opposite the man over a short table. The man’s cologne was so strong that she could smell it despite their distance.

Should I just go back? Reshia wondered, but she shook the thought off and presented a sheet of paper to the man.

A few days ago she reported the results of her visit to the slums. At that time, she

requested for the government to feed the poor rice once every three days, along with other things that could be done to improve their lives. Unfortunately, while Reshia wanted to get to the point as soon as possible, the man's self-introduction never seemed to end.

"Which is why my Count Household..."

Reshia has been expressionless since halfway through, but the man shamelessly continued to boast of himself. Because of that Reshia couldn't help but compare the man to the goblin king.

If this were the king, he would surely go straight to the point instead of meandering needlessly like this. If the king doesn't want to, he'd say it. If he wants to, he'd say it too. He wouldn't waste time.

When Reshia inadvertently sighed, the count finally noticed.

"Oh, it seems this topic is boring the saint," the count said.

"No... About the proposal, do you think it would be possible to implement it?" Reshia said.

The count frowned upon hearing Reshia speak only of what she came here to do.

"Unfortunately, it's impossible to feed the poor rice once every three days. Any help on the slum is impossible as well. The country needs all the resources it can get to subjugate the bandits in the north and to continue the war in the south... Also, this is just between us, but there's also the colonial city being built in the west," the count said.

Reshia didn't know if the man said that last tidbit because he trusted her, but regardless, it seemed there would be more wars. Though there shouldn't be anything else but forest over there. When Reshia thought of that, the iron-armed knight's stern flashed through her mind.

"A colonial city in the west?"

"Lord Gowen persistently asked his highness for it, it seems."

They really intend to go to war, she thought.

Would the king just quietly watch them build that? Reshia didn't think so.

"Thank you for your time, it was a meaningful discussion," Reshia excused herself.

"Won't you stay a bit longer? I have some delicious black tea," the count said.

"No, please excuse me," Reshia said, standing up and then turning heel to leave the room even a moment sooner.

The count clicked his tongue as he watched Reshia hastily leave.

CHAPTER 119

DAIZOS

For the first time, I experienced the difficulty of reconnaissance in a war between different races.

In a battle between humans or goblins, it is simple enough for one to slip into the crowd and appear like everyone else, but that's not possible in a battle between two different races. After all, we look completely different from each other. It simply isn't possible. Even the harpy scouts aren't able to close in on the centaur village as their archers could easily shoot them down.

The mud-scaled tribe were already working as messengers between our group and the advance group consisting of the long-tailed tribe (rizalat) and the fang tribe (werewolves), so they weren't an option.

As I watched the scene before me, I became thoughtful.

"Why are they closing themselves off here?"

Numerous tents had been put up in the middle of the meadows, around which were wooden sticks sticking out from the ground, probably meant for defense. Inside were centaurs wielding wooden shields reinforced with iron. This was the centaur village.

"Fighting on the meadows is supposed to be their specialty."

I don't understand. The forest isn't even that far, it's just about 500 meters away.

But even if they don't want to run to the forest, they should be wanting a large area to exhibit their superior mobility. The greatest advantage of mobility is the ability to repeatedly send out killing moves.

"Yushika, you sure they're not hiding anywhere?" I asked.

The harpy chief shrugged her shoulders as she chuckled. "Yep. Even the mud-scaled tribe says they don't see anything. You sure you're not just being too cautious? They

just couldn't run, that's all."

They just couldn't run?

But why? Is it really just because they look down on us?

I'd really like something more concrete, but we can't wait here forever. We've already mostly surrounded them and the path to the elves has already been cut off by the fang tribe and the long-tailed tribe. Gi Za and his horde of goblins and demihumans is also in position.

The only thing unexpected is that Nikea got herself caught. Or is that a part of her plans too?

"Yushika, I need to send a messenger to the centaurs," I asked.

"Can we expect extra compensation for the risk?" Yushika smiled seductively.

"I'll give you as much as you want," I decided.

After hearing my answer, Yushika flew away.



Dodging the arrows flying toward her, Yushika threw a wooden rod wrapped in white cloth toward the centaur village. In a war between demihumans, this was the way demihumans requested for a temporary ceasefire.

After seeing that the arrows have stopped coming, Yushika flew down.

Yushika gradually approached the ground until she finally landed.

She smiled as usual at the centaurs surrounding her. "Where is Lord Daizos? Or has the centaurs fallen so low that they can't even negotiate anymore?"

Many of the centaurs frowned at her words, clearly angry, but they let it slide. Before long the centaurs made way and Daizos approached her.

"What did you come for?" He asked.

"I'm here as a messenger," Yushika said, bowing respectfully.

Daizos raised his brows. "Fine. I'll hear you out."

Entering the second biggest house in the village, Yushika gave Daizos the goblin king's message.

The conditions the king gave could be said to be exceptional.

One, if the centaurs surrender, they must not ask for compensation for any damages incurred.

Two, they must release Nikea.

Three, they must join the united front against the humans.

Those were the three conditions the king gave, yet Daizos still refused to show agreement.

"Exactly what are you intending to do?" Daizos asked.

"Wow, you're actually going to remain stubborn despite the predicament you're in?" Yushika said, half fed up of Daizos' attitude, but Daizos refused to give in.

"We won't lose to some goblins."

"And what about the other descendants? Hmm? The fangs, the long-tailed ones, the shells, the araneae? You realize they're serious about this war, right?"

"Fallen ones."

"Don't you mean you were just too short-sighted?"

"...Perhaps."

Daizos bitterly smiled as Yushika tried to persuade him. All this time they've been friends, and yet now, they were enemies. Nothing was more painful than losing a friend because of war.

Eventually, Yushika got fed up with trying to persuade Daizos and she asked.

“I know I’m stepping over a line with this one, but why? Why do you hate the goblins so much? I know you said they’re savages, but I don’t think that’s all there is to this,” Yushika said.

Daizos bitterly smiled when he saw Yushika take off that chiefly mask of hers to reveal her truer side: a friend.

“Since you’re going that far, I won’t answer you as chief anymore but as Daizos. I respect the elves. I respect their form, their extravagance aside. The goblins do not have that. I fear that if we join them, our world which has been centered around the elves for so long will crumble,” Daizos solemnly said.

He continued. “I can’t forgive that. I can’t forgive them baring their fangs on the elves who gave us the land we live on and the technology to live.”

“That’s not necessarily the case though. Humans and elves are different, after all.”

“No, they will definitely bare their fangs. Because the elves are corrupted,” Daizos seemed to be scorning himself as he said that.

Yushika was speechless.

“Despite that you’re still going to fight for them?” She asked after a pause.

“The blood of my great-grandfather who swore an oath to the elves flows in my veins. The gratitude handed down generation after generation until me, the very loyalty that permeates us will become nothing more than a lie. I can’t betray them.”

Yushika was greatly troubled by the man in front of her who was saying he would protect the elves despite knowing of their corruption. She wanted to shout at him and call him stubborn, but she wouldn’t be able to change his mind that way. Daizos has probably thought hard about this already.

“...Lord Nikea told me this awhile ago. We can still make it if we talk with the goblin king. I don’t know if you’ve noticed it, but the elves are staying in the village. They came to collect the tax. Nikea said I should talk to the goblin king to ensure their

safety.”

That’s why you didn’t run. No, that’s why you couldn’t run.

“The goblins are no foreigners to negotiations,” Yushika said, pointing out the obvious flaw in his argument.

“No, that goblin will surely use the elves. It’s not greed, but for the goblin king to realize his goals, he needs as many allies he can get,” Daizos said.

And so they will lead even the elves into chaos and ruin?

Daizos continued. “The demon children of chaos, the goblins... The burden they carry is too heavy for us who once dreamed.”

Yushika felt her chest ache when she saw Daizos’ lonely smile. Gurfia was his brother. He was his pride and joy, but before he knew it, he was a ghost, who threatened the demihumans.

“...What do you intend to do about the elves?” Yushika asked.

“I will protect them. To protect them is my will as chief. But even I, as Daizos, believe that they should be protected,” Daizos said.

Yushika stared at Daizos when he pointed out those two faint yet important wills. As a demihuman, Daizos was still young. In human age, he would be in his 30s to 40s, but the position of chief carried with it much trouble.

“I’ve also thought of throwing away this weight on my shoulders many times,” Daizos smiled.

That was not the smile of a happy man, however, but the smile of a man who has resolved himself.

“But if I throw it away, I won’t be me anymore. That’s why I will fight the goblins,” he said.

Finally, Yushika realized that there was no way to persuade the man.

“You’re a fool, Daizos.” Yushika said.

“I think so too,” he said.

Silence filled the room after that, as Yushika didn’t know what to say. When Daizos finally spoke, he was back to being a chief.

“Sorry for complaining. Please forget it... Daizos’ time has ended. From here on out, I will make a decision as chief of the centaurs. Lord Yushika, I shall return Lord Nikea. Please inform the goblin king I wish to challenge him to a duel,” Daizos said.

“A duel?” Yushika asked, unable to understand.

Daizos nodded. “If I win, he must withdraws his troops posthaste. If he wins, however, the centaurs will surrender.”

“You intend to die?” Yushika asked.

“I told you before, I won’t lose to some goblin. I simply intend to minimize casualties on both sides. There is nothing more to it,” he said.

“There’s no guarantee that goblin king will accept it.”

“Then please persuade him. For the sake of protecting the demihumans, and for the sake of protecting your beloved customers.”

“...You’re selfish, you know.”

“Centaurs are like that.”

“...Where is Nikea?”

“I’ll have her brought at once.”

After Nikea arrived, Yushika walked away with her.

As they walked, Yushika passed by Daizos, uttering some last words to a friend she would no longer be seeing from today onwards.

“Farewell, my dearest,” she said.

“Farewell, my dearest neighbor,” Daizos said back.

A bid of farewell between two friends.



After confirming that Nikea was safe, I listened to Yushika’s report.

“A duel, hmm...”

Indeed, that would probably be the best way to conclude this war.

“I’ll accept it.”

I want to minimize the casualties too.

“Also... Apparently, there are elven messengers staying at the centaur village. That’s why the centaurs couldn’t move.”

Yushika wasn’t wearing her usual smile when she said that. Her eyes were filled with resolve as she looked at me.

“I see...”

How to deal with those? I should probably send them off, but I could also use them to negotiate with the elves. To do that though, I’ll need to ensure their safety enough to convince the demihumans.

“We can’t involve the elves in the war,” I said.

If it were only the goblins, it wouldn’t matter much, but the demihumans are with me too.

“There is no reason for Your Highness to personally go out and fight that duel,” Gi Za said. “Let me go instead. There is no reason to risk it.”

Indeed, there’s no reason to risk it. The enemy could pull something just like that time

with Mido.

But he wanted a duel with me.

I can't run away, not as king.

"As I've said once, I am the king. I cannot run away from these challenges. Even if it is dangerous, I can't run. Or else how could I ever be fit to sit in my throne?"

"...I understand," Gi Za said reluctantly.

"Bring the prisoner," I said.

We will be releasing that young centaur we caught on the day of the duel.

"Let's settle this quickly."

The next day, I accepted the duel.



Under the eyes of goblins and demihumans, two men stepped forward.

One was the centaur chief, the other was the goblin king. In their hands were a spear and a long sword, respectively; and serving as their referee was a member of the harpy tribe.

"This war shall be settled with this duel!"

At those words, the two men nodded. They raised their swords and swore.

"Glory and compensation to the victor!"

"Glory and peace to the defeated!"

No one disagreed to the words cried out.

"Swear to the God of Duels, Yul Basta!"

The two men knocked their weapons at the sound of that sonorous voice.

The duel had begun.

The centaur thrust his spear with all of his strength. That spear was truly capable of crushing rocks, and not even the goblin king could come out unscathed under its might, but the goblin king parried that spear and counterattacked, his sword clad in the flames of the underworld goddess. Those flames that burned in the abyss burned fiercely with the fervor of the goblin king.

The goblin king's foot bore into the ground, then following the shortest route with the fastest speed, his sword reached for the centaur chief's legs.

The centaur foresaw what the goblin king intended, so he dodged those flames of hell with the least movement needed and attacked again. If one thrust could not take down the goblin king, then he would thrust a second, no, a third even. And so, three times did the spear struck out, each thrust brimming with the power to wound fatally.

Still, the goblin king dodged those worthy attacks; and in that narrow opening that opened up behind them, the goblin king forced his blade in, cutting toward the arms from below. Any monster would have had its arm lopped off by that attack, but the centaur chief used its quick legs to jump back and retreat.

The two warriors separated. Inwardly, they admired each other's skill. Unfortunately, they were enemies, and thus, there would be no greater way to show the respect they felt but to cut at each other.

The first to step forward was the goblin king. He needed to close in on the centaur quickly to negate the centaur's advantage in reach. Ether exploded behind the goblin king's back. At the same time, he used the resulting acceleration to quickly close in on the centaur. Suddenly, he was right before the centaur. In no time at all, his sword, clad in black flames, was swinging for the centaur. It came swinging at a speed far beyond normal. It was so fast that any other centaur would have had its neck cut off.

To the goblin king's surprise, what resounded next was not the sound of a decapitated head touching the ground, but the sound of clanging iron. Without even time to spare for his ears to ring, the goblin king fell to the ground. Right after, a great wind blew with the centaur's spear as it swept toward the goblin king. That attack that could tear through flesh and crush bones cut through the empty air where the goblin king

should've been before returning to the centaur's hands.

The centaur attacked again, but the goblin king had already fixed his posture and was able to receive his attack.

The fight continued like that, going back and forth.

Meanwhile, while the demihuman and the king were fighting, Gi Za took his druids and moved.

"The moment the king secures victory, we shall attack the centaur village," Gi Za said.

After giving instructions, Gi Za ordered his men to go somewhere they can't be seen.

When Luther of the shell-tribe saw what was happening, he called out.

"What are you doing, Lord Gi Za?" He asked.

"Preparing for war," Gi Za replied.

"The war will end with this. Whether in victory, or in defeat," Luther said.

Gi Za shook his head. It was far too unreasonable. "The king will win. There is no other path. But do you truly believe the centaurs would so willingly surrender? I do not! Those who refuse to put down their spears will hurt the king's victory. To perfect the king's victory, we, his subordinates, must move."

The moment the king won, Gi Za and his horde would move in to capture the village. His preparations were for that. Just waiting for the centaur to surrender was a waste of luck and time.

"That is wrong," Luther said. "To quietly watch your king win is giving glory to your king's victory."

Halfway through his speech, Luther was shocked. So much so that he wondered whether this goblin was truly the same goblin he was talking to awhile ago. On the way to the centaur village, he was so innocent, asking about their tradition, their beasts, and their skills. But now, all of that innocence was gone. In its place was a calm man with only one objective: to attain victory. Even the gaze this goblin looked at him

had changed. Before it was filled with curiosity. Now, it was cold and calculating, as if in this world there were only two types of people: ally or foe.

“To increase the odds of victory even one bit more is my duty. I have no intention of becoming a retainer who is only capable of relying on the king!”

“Then what about the feelings of the centaurs? They are quietly watching this battle. They have left everything to the judgment of the God of Duels.”

Gi Za sneered and shook his head. “It is precisely because you rely on gods that you have fallen... I, no, we do not rely on gods. Our victory is solely due to our king!”

The goblins had no gods. The humans, the demihumans, even the elves might have gods, but the goblins had none. Mother Deetna had already ceased in the abyss, and Altesia, who ruled the underworld, was not their patron. So when Gi Za heard of the demihumans and the elves’ faith, he could only doubt the gods more.

From where did the goblins hail, and to where shall they go?

To live in this world without a god was to be severed from the world.

How lonely is it to live in the world without anyone to revere? Lost and forlorn children thrown out into the world alone.

But.

Fortune turned and the king appeared before them. Now, they no longer had to face that solitude alone.

Our king who is like a god.

We have no gods, but our king stands strong with us. If so, if so then... how can we devote ourselves to the king?

“Do you not fear the gods?” Luther asked with shaking voice.

Gi Za sneered. “Our god has long died. Therefore, we have no god, only a king.”

Though they couldn’t see it from where they were standing, cheers could be heard

from the demihumans and the goblins surrounding the village.

If one listened closely, those cheers were celebrating the king's victory.

“Go! The king has won! Take the village!”

Like that Gi Za took his horde and captured the village.



Level has risen.

48 => 53

CHAPTER 120

A MOVING CHESS PIECE

Status	
Race	Goblin
Level	53
Class	King; Ruler
Possessed Skills	Ruler of the Demon Children of Chaos; Defiant Soul; World Devouring Howl; Sword Mastery A-; Dominator; King's Soul; Ruler's Wisdom III; Household of the Gods; One-Eyed Snake's Evil Eye; The King's Dance at the Edge of Death; Magic Manipulation; Soul of the Berserk King; Third Impact (The Third Chant); Instinct; Blessing of the Underworld Goddess
Divine Protection	Goddess of the Underworld (Altesia)
Attributes	Darkness; Death
Subordinate Beasts	High Kobold Hasu (Lv77); Gastra (Lv20); Cynthia (Lv1); Orc King (Bui) (Lv82)
Abnormal Status	Blessing of the One-Eyed Snake; Protection of the Twin-Headed Snake

Deafening cheers resounded all around.

On my hand was a long sword dripping with blood. Before me was the centaur chief breathing his last breaths on the ground. He was strong. His fast legs, trained specifically for hunting, and his never ending attacks made me thought I would die several times throughout the duel, but in the end what decided victory was my persistence.

He's strong, but somehow, it feels like that strength comes from his resolve to die.

"...It's over, huh," he said, his voice tinged with pain.

"Seems like it," I said.

I raised my black burning sword up. "Let me put you to rest."

"...Wait, before that, hear me out," he said.

"If it's something I can do, sure," I said.

I lowered my sword and knelt beside him.

"Promise me, you'll ensure the safety of my tribe," he said.

"I promise it," I said.

Despite all the bleeding, Daizos' lips curved up into a smile. Seeing him smile despite being in so much pain made me raise up my brows.

"As expected of a king... You, are, reliable... I have, one, more, thing... I'd like to ask. Please, don't, push the, elves any further."

"What do you mean?"

"I am indebted, to them. I can't, speak ill of them, but—"

"—What is this!? What is going on!?"

I looked up upon hearing that shrill voice. What greeted me next were the graceful faces of two elves, one of which seemed high-strung while the other seemed anguished as they looked at us.

"A-a-a goblin? You actually lost to this thing!?" The high-strung of the two elves said.

Nothing was more disgraceful than the way that elf acted. Inadvertently, I narrowed my eyes at that elf's behavior.

Daizos grabbed my arm. "I beg you! King of Goblins, do not..." But before he could finish, the last of his strength left him, and his hand powerlessly fell back to the ground.

I closed his still open eyes.

"...Unfortunately, I don't think that'll be possible after seeing that."

I took my blood-smeared sword with me and approached the screaming elf.

“W-W-What!? What do you want!?” The high-strung elf asked, pointing at me as his voice cramped.

“I am the Goblin King that rules the east,” I said.

“P-Peasant, how dare you!? We are the proud and noble elves! You should be prostrating yourself before us!”

The desire to mess this elf up grew stronger. A vicious smile appeared over my lips. I wanted to swing the sword in my hand and lop off this foolish elf’s head.

To think he wouldn’t even give a word to the person who fought for him.

Such an act is an insult to Daizos... and to me.

“Goblin King, Lord Cecil, I believe it would be best if we send off the dead first before anything else,” the other elf, who looked anguished a while ago, said.

He seems frail, but he’s better off than this one.

I swung my sword to get rid of the blood and the fat before sheathing it by my waist.

“Eek! T-T-That’s dirty!!!”

It was a good opportunity, so I accidentally got some on the elf’s face.

Hmph, dirty, huh. Unfortunately, Daizos, it seems your death meant nothing to these elves of yours.

The better of the two elves walked up to Daizos with a sad look on his face, then he knelt down and offered a silent prayer.

“And you?” I asked to the other elf.

I didn’t really want to ask, but I thought I might as well to see his response.

“W-What?” He asked.

I turned to where Daizos was to indicate that I was talking about him.

The elf’s face twitched as he laughed. “Why would us elves do anything for someone the likes of him?”

I see... It seems this elf is really stupid. Relying solely on his race’s status, while not even thinking the slightest bit about the demihumans. The more I think about it, the more pitiful Daizos becomes.

If he followed me, I could have sent him to die in a more fitting battlefield.

Instead, he fought me, lost, and at the end of his life, begged me to guarantee the safety of the elves. A pitiful end for a warrior.

What value is there to this elf who looks like he’s about to collapse from my glare?

How pathetic.

“...Sorry for that. Please, let me introduce myself.” After the better elf finished praying, he walked over to where I was and bowed his head. “My name is Shunan. I am the envoy tasked with making rounds on the border. This person here is Lord Cecil. He is also an envoy, but he is chief envoy, whereas I am vice-envoy. It is a pleasure to make your acquaintance.”

This man is unusually polite.

“I don’t mind, but...”

As I was talking, Gi Za walked over to me. The direction he came from, however, was from the direction of the centaur village.

“We have captured the village, Your Highness. There were some resistance, but we managed to suppress them. Shall we capture these elves?” He asked.

“That was quick. No, there’s no need to capture them. Just bring them to the centaur chief’s house,” I said.

After Gi Za nodded, I walked over to Yushika, who was standing by his corpse, and called out to her.

“I want to give him a warrior’s burial. Can I leave everything to you? I don’t know how you people do it,” I said.

“Yes... Just for today, it’ll be off the books. Thank you, King of Goblins,” she said.

I didn’t want to see her beautiful face covered in tears, so I turned around.

I didn’t have the right to say anything. After all, one of the reasons behind her sorrow was me. The words of a man like that couldn’t possibly reach her.

Instead, I should be thinking of what I should be doing now. There’s no time for regrets.

Stifling all weakness that sought to rise within me, I looked up ahead.

With this I’ve finally made all the demihumans my allies, opening the door to the elves.

Unfortunately, I never thought the elves would be so weak. I might have expected too much, but I was informed that they sometimes go out to become adventurers, so I expected them to be a bit stronger, yet it seems my expectations were too high. Every time I think back to that elf, I get anxious.

If it’s like this, I might as well just use the goblins to suppress them, but... No, I shouldn’t give in to my temper. The elves are supposed to have technology we don’t have. The technology to train exceptional warriors, to temper weapons, to create armor. Moreover, that vice-envoy might be someone special.

It might be worth my time to talk that to elf called Shunan.

Even if the elves are no good as warriors, they might be useful in other fronts. I need more informations. The informations I got from Selena is not enough.



The goblins and the other demihumans made camp around the centaur village. When everything had settled down, I gathered the goblins and gave them instructions on

hunting and patrolling, while also prohibiting them from insulting the demihumans.

There is much to do. The other demihuman chieftains need to elect a new leader for the centaur village. Peace and order must also be maintained. That elf, Cecil, needs to be dealt with as well.

After finding the time, I called out the vice-envoy, Shunan, along with Shumea, Selena, and Nikea. The sun had already set, so the elf, Shunan, cast his light magic, Light, to light the room.

After Selena, Shumea, and Nikea introduced themselves in order, we began the meeting.

“An alliance? This is a bit sudden. Even if you tell this to me...” Shunan said after I proposed the alliance with a strong conviction.

“If you can’t give a response, we will have no choice but to enter the elven villages,” I said.

“...Is this a threat?” Shunan asked.

“I’ll get straight to the point. I am unhappy with the way you elves behaved this afternoon.”

Shunan frowned upon hearing that. Apparently, I hit a sore spot.

“What I have heard from the descendants of the crystals, I have seen today with my own eyes. I cannot help but feel disappointed. Especially, that man, Cecil,” I said.

“You would actually go so far? Even I cannot stay put after hearing my brethren insulted,” Shunan said.

“Oh? Then are you implying there is more to that man’s behavior other than scorn?”

“That’s...”

I shouldn’t insult them too hard, there’s no point to it. Thinking that, I stifled all my pent up irritation to keep myself from grumbling.

“Will you accept? Will you not? That is all I really want to know,” I said.

“...As of now, that is not possible. I do not have the authority to make such decisions,” Shunan said.

There was a sternness to his face now.

That’s a much better face.

What I need to know now is who has the right to make that decision and what kind of government the elves have. If their government is nothing more than some flimsy body, wherein each village makes their own decisions, then I’ll have no choice but to conquer them one at a time. Hopefully, they’ll have a situation like with the demihumans, but I doubt things will go so smoothly.

“Who has the right then?” I asked.

“The sage’s council,” he said.

So they do have a council of sorts that govern the different villages of the sylphs. Apparently, the representatives aren’t limited to representing only one village. Some of them represent more than one village.

“A council, hmm... I take it they are not always convening.”

“Yes. A meeting is held when deemed necessary, and whatever is decided is implemented to all villages.”

“Let me attend that meeting then.”

“I will have to ask my elder brother first.”

When the words ‘elder brother’ came out, Shunan cast his eyes down.

“When can you ask him?”

“From here it would take 5 days.”

“Even with the elven road?”

A look of shock appeared on Shunan's face, then he immediately turned to Selena.

Sighing, he shook his head in resignation.

"No, with the elven road it should only take a day."

"Then please ask that brother of yours as soon as you can. Until then, we'll keep that man, Cecil, here in the village."

If we let Cecil go instead, he might abandon Shunan. But if it's this weak-looking man, he probably won't abandon him. Putting it positively, he looks trustworthy. Negatively, he looks weak.

"What we seek is only the strength to fight back against the humans. We have no hostile intentions toward the elves," I said.

"I... understand."

There's no reason to say any more than this.

This man will inform the elves what we have told him, so it's best to keep our impressions good.

"Well then. That'll be all tonight."

I glanced at Selena, and timidly, she stepped forward.

"This girl was taken captive by the humans. Due to some circumstances, I am currently taking care of her. Why don't you talk with her a bit?"

After that I stood up and left with the others.

The next day, Shunan left to request that meeting.



Westmost of the demihuman region, a five days' walk from the centaur village, was the forest known as the Rustling Forest. The wind ^{Sylphs} elves liked to name each forest they lived in.

The Tranquil Forest, the Rustling Forest, the Silent Forest, the Windy Forest, the Forest of the Lost, the Whispering Forest, there were countless forests in the region of the sylphs, but in a relatively bigger forest, in a relatively bigger village, was a meeting between six sylphs.

It has been three days since Shunan bid farewell to the Goblin King.

The six representatives of the sylphs were gathered in one building.

There was no one else in the meeting except for these six people. They were gathered around a round table, upon which was drawn a golden spiral ivy, symbolizing the wealth and advanced technology they were so proud of.

The elves lived twice as long as humans. They aged slower, accordingly. From the humans' perspective, the elves were indeed beautiful. So beautiful, in fact, that their faces are said to be carved after Mother Deetna's. This was said for both men and women.

Be that as it may, there were still individual differences.

"Why in the world would the goblins have the right to negotiate with us?" An elf by the name of Fenit, hailing from the Tranquil Forest ^{Symphoria}, said. The fat on his body greatly shook as he spoke.

"Is it true that the demihumans have fallen to the goblins?" Silver from the Forest of the Lost ^{Sheng} was dubious. He was short and plump, and as he listened to Shunan's proposal – essentially, the goblin king's proposal – a look of displeasure could be seen on his face. "It seems the demihumans need reminding who they're masters are."

"Indeed," Priena of the Silent Forest ^{Sinfall} with his beautiful but cold eyes and Nash of the

Whispering Forest with his slender body agreed.

“...We could stay quiet, but then nothing would be resolved,” Shure of the Rustling Forest, Shunan’s brother, crossed his arms and frowned.

Quietly nodding was the middle-aged Falun. The forest he represented was the Windy Forest.

“But you know, Shure Forni. I don’t believe your junior brother’s words have any place in this council. Surely you don’t actually believe we would work with some goblins, do you?” Silver Sheng sneered as he looked up Shure’s face.

Shure turned to him with a face as calm as still waters. “You have no intentions of accepting the goblin’s proposal then, I take it?”

When Shure asked a second time, the one who blew up in anger was not Silver but Fenit.

His overgrown tummy shook waves as he yelled. “Enough with this bullshit!”

The middle-aged Falun was greatly perplexed at the man’s lack of grace. “...I don’t believe those words are appropriate for the noble-minded.”

“Of course,” Priena Sinfall agreed as he looked coldly at Falun. “But the same could be said for Lord Shure.”

“If this is all you have to say, I would like to request that this meeting be dismissed. Is there anyone in disagreement?” At Nash Jirad’s proposal, the meeting came to an end.

After four elves left, only Shure and Falun were left.

“What do you think?” Shure’s wise-looking face frowned a bit as he looked sharply at Falun.

“The sage’s council is not truly united. That’s basically it,” he said, sighing.

Shure nodded. “Is it exactly as Shunan said? The human threat?”

“The reports from the adventurer elves goes in line with his report. The warring kingdom, Germion, has turned its eyes on the forest.”

“...I take it victory isn’t possible unless we unite the elves then?”

“Most likely...”

The middle-aged Falun caressed his beard as he agreed.

“Then for the sake of the sylphs, I shall carry this shame.” Shure smacked his hands, and in the next moment, Shunan and some elven youths appeared.

“It is as you’ve heard,” Shunan said. “We will need to talk. Shunan, tell the Goblin King to bring his horde here.”

Shure spoke those words as calmly as he could. After Shunan and the elven youths nodded they left.

“Are you sure about this? Things might not go according to plan.” Falun said.

Shure bitterly smiled. “It is impossible for things to go exactly as you plan them. To deal with the problems that arise in one’s plan is precisely what leads to victory. I would have liked more time, however...” Shure said.

“So young yet already so brilliant. We of Gastair do not regret throwing our lots with Forni.”

“Thank you, ^{shifon} teacher.”

“Hah, it’s been a while since I was last called that. I think I’ll begin preparations. I have to show my face in the banquet, after all.”

The remaining two members of the sage’s council stood up.

“By the way,” Falun said, remembering something as he stood up. “Your daughter... Shumelia is almost of age, I believe.”

Shure faintly smiled, but it seemed sarcastic. “She has become quite a shrew, actually. I’m not sure who she takes after.”

“It’s good to be vigorous while young. Ha ha ha!”

The next day, Shunan returned to the goblin king and extended an official invitation for him and his horde.

CHAPTER 121

AN INVITATION FROM THE ELVES

Shunan returned. Unexpectedly, the elves accepted us. Not just a few of us either, but the whole horde of 140 goblins.

“That went rather smoothly,” I said.

It seems suspicious, especially when I see Cecil acting the way he usually does. But I don’t think this sylph called Shunan is the type to lie.

“My elder brother, Shure, is aware of the state of the east. He knows that the humans are trying to invade the forest, so he says there’s no need for needless fighting,” Shunan said.

If that’s true, then this alliance shouldn’t take long. But I wonder... This could be a trap.

“It’s just that the other members of the Sage Council aren’t as flexible as my brother, so...” Shunan said.

I see... So he’s doing this on his own accord against the wishes of the other elves. Well, as long as there’s one tribe willing to accept us, we can manage.

We’ll just have to gradually gather more support from the other tribes. I hope he doesn’t mind providing us weapons and technology, as well as some man power.

Other than that there’s also the issue of what the goblins will do after the humans are defeated.

Will the goblins rule over the humans?

When it comes to ruling that includes maintaining the public order, protecting the law, and managing the government.

One way to go about things is through indirect ruling. That is to say we won’t directly rule the humans but instead rely on a human to rule over them.

In other words, we would be creating a fake feudal lord to rule the humans through.

The advantage to this method is that the people won't blame us but the fake feudal lord we created.

There's also the fear of goblin rule that needs to be considered.

Goblins have never stood above humans before. If they were to suddenly stand above them, a revolt would surely occur.

Therefore, it is necessary to slowly wean the humans to goblin rule. At first, the goblins will only be used to maintain order, but gradually, they will take over the government and the law. In order to do that, however, the goblins first need to learn how to rule and govern. That is something that can only be learned from those who have created their own societies. Namely, the humans, the demihumans, and the elves.

The ones who have the most developed society are of course the humans. With a system based on trade and currency, they are undoubtedly the most prosperous race in the world. Of course, that's because they won the war. Other than that it's also because of the divine protections they have received and the workings of their heroes. But such things are merely secondary. The biggest contributor to their prosperity is their social system. In other words, trade and currency.

When the people gather, trade occurs, causing even more people to gather. This cycle repeats itself, until eventually, a metropolis is born. The birth of a metropolis means the widening of roads and the creation of many villages nearby, creating wealth. The onset of wealth, however, is not all good. For where there is wealth, there are predators. To expel these greedy ones, who are full of lust for the forbidden fruit, it is necessary to create the military. Finally, a country is born.

By expelling the invaders and expanding the country, the territory of the humans naturally expanded. The current state of the world is precisely because of humanity's superior social system, a system the elves and the demihumans could not match.

It is not perfect, however. The increase in population and wealth will naturally lead to a disparity of wealth and status. This is directly connected to war. If not war, then at the very least, the lives of the people will be harsh. So harsh that they would have to burn themselves out just to live their lives. A painful prosperity, so to speak.

But what about the demihumans?

Of course, I don't know how it was in the past, but I can roughly guess how they are today by inferring from their current situation. By living in small villages, they are able to keep their peculiarities. Through trade they are able to form a cooperative body of sort, shallow as it may be. On the surface, their system does not seem any inferior than the humans', but is that really the case? Of course not, the demihumans are ages behind humanity. Their flimsy system can never hope of matching the entirety of humanity. Not with their bartering nor the meager scale of their trades, which are limited solely between villages. They have no currency. They do not even have tax, though because of that there is not much difference between individuals' social statuses.

Knowing this, can the demihumans possibly rule over the humans? The answer is no. They cannot. Because they are too simple.

What about the elves then?

Do they understand the concept of ruling over others? Are they able to grasp the essence of the few ruling the multitude? Looking at Cecil, it seems as if they are only able to rely on the good graces of others, but... Let us pray that Cecil is merely an outlier and not a representative of the common elf.

"Let us go then. You will be leading the way, I take it?" I said.

"Of course," Shunan said.

After informing Shunan that we will be leaving the next day, I gathered the goblin leaders and gave them their orders. I also thanked the demihumans for their cooperation and asked them to begin communications with the goblins to the east.

"Gi Za, stay here as relay for the meantime," I said.

"I don't mind, but... will you be alright without me?" Gi Za said.

He was serious.

Wryly smiling, I said, "You don't actually think anyone would make trouble after seeing

a horde this big, do you?"

"Well... That's true." Gi Za said after becoming thoughtful for a moment.

Gi Za's mission is to maintain communication with the demihuman and ensure that the path to the elven territory remain unobstructed. After all, it would be troublesome if we had to retreat, only to find that the path home had been cut.

"Don't let your guard down, though," Gi Za said.

"I know," I said.

He worries too much, but his loyalty is the real deal.

The next day, we departed for the elven village. I left 10 goblins with Gi Za and took the remaining 130 with me.



Hawk-Eyed Fick, Fick Barbad, was in a long while sharing a drink with his old friends in the bar at Germion Kingdom. Mill the Mage Slayer, Wyatt the Herculean, Yugil, Vitz... The people gathered were all members of Gulland's previous expedition to the forest.

It's already been a month since they escaped from that perilous forest, and since then, they've been living their lives. But whether they were living their lives in the east or the west, they never forgot to regularly exchange information with one another.

The bars frequented by the adventurers are the same everywhere. They're chaotic, full of fervor, and the food and wine are all priced according to taste.

Atop the tables were various food lined up, while the beer mugs were all filled with ale to relieve the parched throats of these adventurers after a day's hard work.

"Thank you for gathering here today. I'm not gonna be so formal about this, but..." Wyatt the Herculean said, at which, everyone raised up their mugs. "First, a toast. For all those who couldn't make it, for all those who made it."

After knocking their mugs together, the group of adventurers started digging in at the great feast laid out over the table. The adventurers heartily drank their fill of ale, but

then all eyes suddenly gathered on Mill the Mage Slayer.

“...It’s lukewarm,” she complained.

“A bit late to be complaining after chugging it in one go, don’t you think?” Hawk-Eyed Fick remarked, causing Yugal and Vitz to laugh. It seems the mage slayer was actually a heavy drinker.

“Gulland’s in the north, so it probably couldn’t be helped, but it’s still too bad that the White Hand of Life couldn’t make it,” Wyatt said.

Vitz’ brows rose when he spoke about her. “Don’t talk about her anymore. The food will go bad.”

“Oho? And here I thought you guys were hitting it off. Weren’t you always together?” Wyatt asked.

“I felt like a kid being sent to the slaughter house, you know. I was so scared I thought I’d end up turning to heresy,” Vitz said, shrugging his shoulders, causing Wyatt to chuckle.

“She’s on a pilgrimage right now for the on a mission’s trip, but she’ll come back when she’s done,” Yugal said.

Seeing Yugal actually open his mouth for once when he never did when they were in the forest caused Mill to do a double take.

“You can talk?” She asked.

“I just have stage fright,” Yugal said, causing the group to break out into laughter.

“I-I’m being serious,” Yugal argued, beet red, causing the group to laugh even harder.

“By the way, did you hear? The feudal lord of the western region, Lord Gowen, is apparently building a colonial city in the west,” Fick said as he wiped his teary eyes from laughing too much.

“Hmm... So they’re that much of a threat, huh. But will they really just let them build that thing?” Wyatt the Herculean rubbed his chin and wondered.

“...What’s a colonial city?” Mill asked Wyatt after drinking her fourth mug.

“A strategic base... Do you understand?” Wyatt said.

“Nope,” Mill promptly replied.

“In other words, it’s a fortress that’s also a village.” Wyatt placed a black bread on an empty plate and struck it with a fork to illustrate his point. “Generally, walls would be extended from this point to the left and to the right, building watch towers in equal spaces.”

He lined up some pig’s sausage.

“This is done to completely isolate the outside from the inside. To that end, it is usually preferred that the walls be 3 meters high. That way, if anyone tries to climb them, the soldiers would be able to pierce them with their spears. To top it all off, a canal is built along the perimeter of the walls... Good grief, this is going to be long.”

This time he lined up some pasta outside the sausages.

“Land is cultivated inside the colonial city to allow the city to be self-sufficient. It still depends on the mayor, but the taxes in colonial cities are usually lowered. As for who tills the land, it’s usually either the farmers or the soldiers who want to make some extra on the side.”

This time Wyatt piled up some salad inside the sausages. He added some Kabacho, a kind of green vegetable, some round-cut Touma, a kind of vegetable that’s red and very sour, then he added some syrup on top for taste. The salad looked heavenly.

“The colonial city is equipped with defenses to protect itself while the army is away. At the same time, it also has facilities to help offensive maneuvers, ensuring that the attack is successful. These facilities were frequently used when battling the bandits in the north. Notable colonial cities include Yuyurad to the south and Sonoia to the north.”

Mill emptied her sixth mug as she watched Wyatt play with his sausage.

“...Yuyurad didn’t have stone walls,” Mill said.

The city of Yuyurad wasn't far from the capital. Presently, it has become one of the biggest exporter of food to the capital.

"Well, when the role of the city changes, the walls would be demolished," Vitz said.

"Really?" Mill asked to Wyatt.

"Yes. Yuyurad was a colonial city 100 years ago. It was originally constructed to conquer the south and the west. Currently, it is the frontline in the war against Yotsun Hell far to the south. You've taken a fair share of quests to transport goods, right? Yuyurad is currently being used as a base while the war is waged along the Kubel River."

Wyatt bit his delicious black bread filled with Kabacho, Touma, and pig sausage.

"Mmm... Delicious," Wyatt said.

Wyatt's sausage burst out with juice and fat along with the assorted veggies. When Mill heard the sounds Wyatt made, she finally stopped drinking and ate.

"Fick, you're currently living in the south right? How is it?" Vitz asked Fick as he chewed on the aromatic chicken leg.

"Free cities usually have more of that impending danger kind of feeling, but well... That place is always flourishing with business and is always in war, so..." Fick said.

Wyatt twined his pasta around his fork, then gulped it down with his tongue sticking out.

"There are a lot of jobs, but that just goes to show how dangerous the place is. It's fine if you just think you're dealing with a scuffle or two."

"Jobs like last time sure are rare though, huh," Yugil said as he removed the bones of his fried fish, then stuffed his mouth with its meat. The aroma of the fried fish spread within his mouth, causing him to inadvertently smile as he looked at Fick.

"There's almost none down in the south," Fick said.

“What about the Holy Shushunu Kingdom to the east?” Vitz asked.

After Wyatt emptied his place in no time at all, he took another bread and smiled.

“Can’t recommend it. I stand out because I’m a leader, but really... If you want a job, the west is the place to go,” Fick said, prompting Yugal to become thoughtful.

Seeing Yugal like that, Vitz slapped him on the shoulder. “You want to fight against that monster again? You sure are curious.”

“No, that’s not it. I’m just regretting a bit. If I don’t become stronger...” Yugal said.

“Then why don’t you try coming to my clan for a bit? I don’t mean to toot my own horn, but it’s pretty popu—” Fick said when a voice interjected.

“Oh? Are the famed swallows so lacking in number that they’re starting to hire people?” The voice said.

Vitz turned around.

What he saw almost made him curse the heavens, but somehow, he keep quiet and smile.

The White Hand of Life was dressed in a white robe as usual. She took a seat beside Vitz.

“I see you’re eating well,” she said.

After emptying a mug full of ale passed to her, she shook her head. “This is really lukewarm.”

Mill nodded while Fick just gave her a fed-up look.

“Who cares? Rather than that, are you seriously going to keep your hood up while eating?” Wyatt asked with a sober face like that of a strict father.

The White Hand of Life laughed and took off her hood, revealing the face of a beautiful woman. With silver hair, emerald eyes, a sculpted nose, and a smile that never ceased, she was one to dazzle.

"It would be troublesome if people got to know my face, so I usually keep my hood down. Sorry," she said.

"How exactly would that trouble you? I mean, personally, I'd like to get famous," Fick asked, puzzled and beet red.

The White Hand of Life smiled. "It's troubling when you're a girl in a man's world, right, Vitz?"

Vitz couldn't help but turn away at those words full of meaning.

"Ah, yeah," he said.

For some reason, Vitz seemed to be in despair.

This time the White Hand of Life turned to Yugil.

"I wonder if you'd be interested in a hunting job?" She asked.

"Huh? No. Umm..." Yugil said, completely disoriented.

She smiled. "It's a bit too dangerous to go to the west right now, so the south is probably better."

"The free cities are at war," Fick said.

The White Hand of Life nodded and ate a slice of cheese. "I mean deeper down south, around the city of Galahad by the sea. There should be a lot of hunting jobs there."

"Of course, there's that," Wyatt nodded.

Mill looked at him as if she wanted an explanation.

"The thing is... Going to the west right now is suicidal. Besides, that goblin is probably on a rampage and entering the forest is forbidden anyway. The jobs put out by the guild are at most by the forest's perimeter. No one is entering the forest at all," the White Hand of Life shrugged her shoulders, prompting Yugil to hang his head.

“You don’t want to die yet, right?” The sly expression that appeared on her beautiful face caused the two adventurers who had traveled with her to shiver.

“...Did you two boys forget your balls?” Mill asked, prompting the White Hand of Life to laugh loudly.

“Anyway, cheers! For meeting again after a long time,” the White Hand of Life said.

Everyone raised up their mugs—

“To our reunion! Cheers!”

—and knocked them together.

The adventurers were as lively as always.

Tl Note: Made a mistake in the title last chapter. The elf message thing is the title for this chapter not the last.

INTERMISSION

FANFAN'S PICTURE DIARY

Status	
Name	Fanfan
Race	Mud Scale (Tarpidae)
Level	81
Class	Chieftain; Hardest Claws
Possessed Skills	Cave Dweller
Divine Protection	Moonlight Goddess
Attributes	Night

Several days after the Goblin King traveled to the west, I attended the Eight Flags Meeting. The tall shaman goblin, Gi Za Zakuend, was also attending.

The topic of the meeting was the planned cultural exchange with the goblins. Cooperation would be necessary in order to stand against the human threat. Of course, no one held any delusions that the goblins and the demihumans would be able to work together well without any practice.

Everyone understood the situation. Yep, everyone.

Heading the meeting was the araneae, Nikea, while the secretary was me.

The secretary is great.

As for how great, she's so great that she's only second to the chairman of the meeting.

"No one has any disagreements on the cultural exchange then? If so, then the next topic will be picking out the people going," Nikea said.

Nikea was serious. Much more serious than me.

There wasn't anything interesting to do in the meeting, so it came as no surprise that that old man from the shell tribe, Luther, would be dozing off, his head completely pulled back into his shell.

But the minotaur was horrible. He actually had the gall to snore so loudly during the meeting. And those eyes! Why are his eyes open? Scary!

As for the fang tribe, they're... no good. Why? There's a lot of reasons, but for one, Mido is chewing on a bone. Disgusting.

No one is bothering to tell them off because everyone knows it's pointless. Despite their sloppy behavior though, they're unexpectedly reliable.

The new centaur chief is called Tianos. At first, he was angry, then he was shocked. In the end, he just broke down crying. Well, not really, but he looks about to anytime now. Meh, he'll get used to it. He's already better off than Daizos anyway. That one would have gone off on a rampage. He's the type that's always angry, after all.

The meeting continued as I drew on my picture diary.

Eventually, Nikea and the harpy, Yushika, got into an argument.

Yushika has been depressed lately, so she probably needs to release some of that pent-up stress. She argued with Nikea while she groomed her wings.

The representative of the long-tailed tribe had a weak presence as usual. It would be great if he just disappeared like that. Those two heads of his makes it annoying to talk to him. You just can't tell which head you're supposed to talk to.

Oops, my bad. The picture recording for the meeting needs to be two lines side-by-side. That was close. If I don't do this seriously, Nikea will scold me.

As I was thinking that, the goblin, Lord Gi Za, stood up.



After whispering something by Nikea's ears, Gi Za left the meeting.

When I stole a glance at Nikea, I was shocked!

Is that a blush!?

Nikea!? I almost yelled her name out loud, but fortunately, I managed to catch myself in time.

Good job, Fanfan! What a big scoop! We need to draw this immediately!

But didn't Nikea have a good relationship with the Goblin King?

Yep. They did. They definitely did. Which means... Nikea is caught in the middle of a love triangle!!!

KOKOKO KOKEkKOkKOooOO!

No, calm down, Fanfan! The moonlight goddess, Vardina, is watching! Deep breath, take a deep breath... Whew. Forgive me, o goddess! Fanfan lost her cool for a moment.

But it's alright. It's still alright. Fanfan is calm now. Calm... Now, let's calmly analyze the situation.

Nikea gets along well with the Goblin King. Fanfan is calm. Yep, Fanfan is calm.

Lord Gi Za gets along with Nikea. Yep, calm. Calm as spring rain Fanfan is...

If we put one and two together?

We get a... lo-ve tri-an-gle.

KOKOKOKOKO KOBOLDddDdd!

Wait! That's not right! They're goblins!

This is a disaster! An amazing scoop!

Interracial, no, an interspecies relationship was enough to get me hot, but to think Nikea would actually be the subject of a love triangle!!!

KOKOKO KOKEkKOkKOooOO!

If only he were here, the king would surely embrace Nikea into his burly arms. But he's not! So the cool-eyed Lord Gi Za took advantage of the king's absence and approached Nikea!!

Being chief, Nikea could not refuse the king's advances! The king wasn't one to take advantage of someone's weakness, but their current situation alone was enough to seduce Nikea! What a schemer!

But then Lord Gi Za found out about their secret relationship, and the pangs of jealous bore into his heart.

He cried! *The king is mine!*

...

Huhhhhh!?

This, this is!

A f-f-f-forbidden territory! I can't. I mustn't. If I enter, I will surely never again see the light. Stop, Fanfan! You mustn't! Return to the light!

Before I knew it, Lord Gi Za was back in his seat.

From time to time, Nikea would send him a sharp glance...

This is definitely, undoubtedly... a threat!

Nikea is being threatened! Under that ever serious mask of hers, has Lord Gi Za actually managed to grasp her weakness?

To think he would accomplish such a fea- erm, sin, how envi- erm, how evil! Absolutely despicable! But why is my heart beating so quickly? Forgive me Nikea. Fanfan is a bad child. A bad child... But alas! I cannot stop!

Nikea's whole hearted devotion to his highness is in danger, but Lord Gi Za himself dreams of his highness day and night... Oh, Your Majesty, how sinful you are.



Suddenly, someone grabbed my shoulders, prompting me to turn around. When I did, what greeted me was Nikea's angry face, veins visibly bulging.

"What are you drawing, Lord Fanfan?" She asked.

Reality was a harsh thing. Just one moment, Nikea was a pitiful young maiden, but then in the next, she was a terrifying ogre whose arms ferociously grasped my shoulders.

"Erm... the meeting?" I said, unsure.

"This?" Nikea asked.

I sincerely nodded.

"Lord Fanfan, who asked you to draw? A secretary is supposed to write with words," Nikea said as she looked down on Fanfan's picture diary. "To think the important letter we would be sending to the elves would be this..."

It was a very embarrassing thing to have your work seen by others, but if it's Nikea, she might like it. It's a work I'm confident in, after all.

"In any case, Lord Fanfan, please prepare a clean sheet of paper. Do you understand?" Nikea said.

"Alright, what about this?" Fanfan asked.

This is my proud work, but if Nikea wants it, I'll give it. I'm reflecting on my actions, after all.

"I have no idea what you drew. Please take it home."

Shock.

After the meeting, I secretly cried by myself on my bed.

Even though I was so proud of it... Sniff.



Cave Dweller

Can freely dig through earth.

Author's Note: Even though Gi Za only told Nikea to take her job seriously.

CHAPTER 122

FOREST METROPOLIS

“...This is more than I expected,” I muttered in praise, earning Shunan’s smile.

The goblins following me were the same. It was as if they had found themselves in a giant’s nest, their unabashed curiosity reveling in their surroundings.

I knew that the elves built their home upon the forest, but seeing it for myself still left me speechless. Giant trees towered over the whole forest, creating a roof of evergreen leaves. These giant trees were at least 20 meters high, around which the elves built there houses, creating a village with a leafy roof above.

The trunk of the trees were so wide that 30 goblins holding hands wouldn’t be able to surround them. The green roof erected by the trees created a mild shade from sunlight that blocked its rays just enough to let the right amount of light through.

The trees grew more sparse and smaller the farther away from the village one went, but they were still quite big. Big enough that it would take 10 goblins holding hands to surround them.

The sun here is pleasant. Looking closely, one would see medicinal plants and multicolored flowers blooming by the roots of the giant trees.

Elves with higher social status lived higher up the trees, but they didn’t live that high up. It seems they generally preferred a lifestyle close to the ground. The quality of their daily necessities, however, were of much greater quality compared to the humans.

The elven furnitures were all skilfully crafted and easy to use. They were truly a sight to behold.

“My elder brother is caught up with something and won’t be able to attend to us for awhile, so let me show you show around in the meantime,” Shunan said.

Leaving the goblins just outside the village to make camp, I took Selena and Shumea with me to go on Shunan’s tour.

“Wow, this is amazing,” Shumea remarked with wide-open eyes.

Selena was all smiles as she explained various things. Who would’ve thought that that girl who was always hiding behind Shumea would be so proactive once we entered the village? Secretly, my mood turned for the better.

We’ve just started and this visit is showing good results already.

“I heard there are koro dwarves in the elf villages,” I said carefully, but to my surprise, Shunan nodded without the slightest hint of wariness.

“There are,” he said. “Shall I introduce you? The ones living in the villages nearby are the most famous.”

“Please. I want to ask them to forge a great sword for me.”

Nodding, Shunan led me to a cave underground. When I listened closely, I could hear the sounds of metal being hit.

Dwarves who looked just like the white-skinned Gordob goblins and light-brown rugged versions of them went in and out of the cave ceaselessly. They were even smaller than the normal goblins, reaching up only their chest. They were probably not even 4ft. tall.

“We’ll try talking to the smith, but... You should know, he’s a moody one. If he says no, it’s no. You’ll just have to give up then,” Shunan said.

The elves probably don’t get refused much, but as I’m a goblin, the odds might be worse for me.

After a while a light-brown-skinned dwarf with a grown beard walked out. His exposed arms were huge and burly and his body was built like a rock. On his shoulder was a giant hammer bigger than himself.

“You the bastard who asked for me?” He asked.

I took out the broken fragments of Iron Second and presented it to the koro dwarf. “I am someone from the east. I would be much obliged if you could fix this broken great

sword.”

The koro dwarf stared at me a good while before he turned his gaze to the great sword.

“This is...” Staring at my great sword while fondling his majestic beard, his face went ghastly. After a while he took a fragment.

“I hear you are the most skilled around here. Please fix it,” I said, sincerely bowing my head.

“Since when did goblins learn to speak like you do? Weird guy. Fine, I’ll stake the name Dumbre Dadee David and fix it. But what will you give me?”

A price, hmm... What to do.

“Smith, this is elder brother’s guest, so...” Shunan tried to argue.

But the koro dwarf shut him down. “Shut it, kid!”

The koro dwarf looked up at me.

“If you can fix it well, I will promise to swing my sword once for you,” I said.

“A bloody oath fitting for a great sword, eh? I think I like you. It’ll take a while for the sword to finish. You staying in this village for a while?”

“I intend to.”

“Come back in 10 days then.”

After gathering all the fragments Dumbre Dadee David left.

“My apologies if he’s worsened your mood. He’s really stubborn, that one, so...” Shunan said.

“Don’t worry, I’ve taken no offense. He’s good, right? I’m looking forward to it,” I said.

Shunan thought I’d get mad, so when he saw me unaffected, he was quite surprised. After staring at me for a good second or two, he continued his tour.

Unexpectedly, I received a fairly welcome reception in the places he brought me to.

“Weren’t goblins looked down on by the elves?” I asked.

Shunan laughed. “My elder brother has instructed everyone that he intends to form an alliance with you, so they’re all behaving accordingly.”

This brother of his seems quite influential.

He might be the person I’ve been waiting for, a leader who can rule over others. My heart raced at the thought. Like that I returned to the goblins.



The next day I finally met Shunan’s elder brother. He was a dignified man with the graceful face you’d expect of the elves. He had long blond hair, almond eyes, a sculpted nose, and a straight mouth that showed his strong resolve.

Toufen Arata

“Friend from the east, welcome. It is an honor to meet the Goblin King,” Shure said.

There was a strange rhyme about his words, probably brought about because of his identity as someone who inherited the words of the spirits.

“You call me friend, but I don’t believe we’ve been acquainted,” I said.

“Like-minded people are friends, no?” he said as if it were perfectly natural.

There were no hints of him forcing himself nor where there any hints of him trying to deceive me. He was as honest as clear water.

Recovering my calm, I lowered my voice and spoke with a sharp gaze, “So you know me, but I do not know you.”

Grabanashtur Fioren Naga

“Faster than the wind, the bird. Let us not be anxious. There are many things yet to know,” Shure said as he led me to his house.

“I prepared these things in haste, so they might not be much, but it would bring me

much joy if you could accept them as a show of good faith,” Shure said as he showed me a pile of armor pieces, from breastplates to helmets. There were so many they couldn’t be counted.

“You really intend to give all these to us?”

Grabanashtur Fioren Naga
“False words sink into the abyss. These are all made of steel. I’m sure they’ll prove invaluable for the goblins.”

His face was as still as the surface of a tranquil lake, not a ripple could be seen over it.

“Thank you, but there is something I would like to ask first.”

“Ask ahead.”

“What are you going to use when the fighting begins?”

Suddenly, it was as if the air had frozen over.

“My oh my, you sure are sharp. Normally, just this would be enough to win one over,” Shure said, narrowing his eyes.

I smiled. “It seems what was passed down among your kind was the method of creating special armors.”

The elves should have a way of creating blue steel (Srilana), a metal stronger than steel and yet softer than glass and treasure steel (Orichalcum), a kind of metal that conducts mana better than iron. Selena did mention these things, but I kept quiet about it, and now, I see that it is indeed true.

Just a while ago, this elf before me was as soft as spring breeze, and yet now, he stands before me like the cold wind of the north.

“Hmph. I suppose you’re not just brawns then,” he said.

The change he went through was so excessive I did a double take for a moment before collecting myself. It seems this is his real personality.

“Please, have a seat,” he said, offering me a chair.

The seat he offered was by no means cheap, as it managed to fit me snugly without making me feel confined. I would like one of these. In between us was a short table. We sat opposite each other.

“Let me introduce myself again. I am Shure Forni. The lord of the Rustling Forest, Forni, and a member of the Sage’s Council.”

A proud man, though I suppose that’s to be expected from an elven sage. Regardless, since he tried to buy me out first, he must at least be better off than that idiot (Cecil).

“I am the Goblin King from the east.”

“A pleasure to meet you... If I may get straight to the point, the words I said before were not a lie.”

I thought back on his words a while ago.

Silence filled the room, and the first to break it was Shure.

“We do wish to ally ourselves with those of like mind.”

“Against the humans, you mean.”

“Yes.”

The pair of emerald eyes he looked at me with were as still as shallow waters, but they seemed to run deep as they sought to measure my worth.

Hmm... It might be better if I speak frankly here.

“We fought the humans some time ago. They were 400 men strong, and while we suffered considerable losses, we did manage to repel them.”

“Oh?”

“My goal is to create a country that will not lose out to humans.”

“A goblin kingdom?”

For a moment, he cast his eyes down, then he looked back up at me. I don't know what sort of calculations ran through his head just now, but he wordlessly implored me to continue.

“Defeating the humans will prove challenging, but it's not impossible. The issue comes after. Ruling them is currently beyond the power of the goblins. Of course, there are ways to go about it, but...”

We could take our time or choose our methods, but it should eventually be possible. The problem is it will take too long.

“Hmm...” Nodding once, Shure fell into a deep thought again. After a while, he spoke. “So aside from weapons and armor, you also want people after you defeat the humans?”

Seeing me nod, Shure crossed his arms. “Do you know what we want?”

I replied. “We will swear an oath not to invade the forest. The territory east of the demihumans will be ours, but we will not invade the lands to the west.”

Shure became thoughtful again, then he asked. “I beg your pardon, but are you aware of the geography of the world?”

“...Aside from the forest in the east, no.”

It would be pointless to lie. I don't know what this man is thinking, but I'll just have to hear him out.

“Of course, the goblins have been thriving in the east these past few years. Excuse me...”

Shure walked away to a corner of the room, then came back with a scroll on him. He laid the scroll over the table.

“This is...” I muttered.

“The world,” he answered.

This was the first time I saw the map of the world.

“We are in this region.” Shure pointed to a region on the map.

To the north were the numerous mountain ranges. In the center were forests. To the right were plains and patches of forests. To the south was a desert, but beyond it were the seas. Deep into the sea was an archipelago. Then finally, to the west were the plains and a far-off continent.

The forest being the center was of course simply because the elves made the map and not because it actually was so. Until now, it’s only been a vague target, but with this map before me, I finally have a clear image of that which I must conquer.

“What is the situation in the northern mountain ranges? Are there humans living in the desert? And that continent to the west, what sort of place is it?” I asked without intending to. As a result Shure’s brows rose.

“You know the cardinal points? I see... So you are indeed not a common goblin. I would very much like to know from where you unearthed that knowledge, but fine... I’ll fill you in first,” he said.

“...Please,” I said.

This man is sharp. If I’m not careful, I might spill more than I need to.

“The northern mountain ranges, also known as the mountains of the snow god, Yggdrasil. There are humans living there alongside the snow, but they rarely enter the forest. They’re not hostile, but they’re not allies either.”

Shure pointed to the southern desert. “The southern desert, the great desert of the desert god, Ashunasan. There are indeed some humans living here, but they do not trespass onto our lands. The problem is the west.”

Though less so compared to the east, the west also had plains, and then some water, beyond which was a continent. “This area is dominated by humans. It’s still better off compared to east, but the people here do kidnap our people from time to time.”

In other words, the enemy is largely situated to the east. There are some tough nations

down to the south, but because of the dangerous monsters lurking there, there's not a lot of room to maneuver. The west on the other hand, having little influence, seems to be a relatively easier target.

"Unfortunately, the west also has people migrating to it from the continent beyond the sea," Shure said with perfect timing, almost as if he had read my thoughts, causing me to raise my brows.

"Anything on mind?" He asked.

"Do you elves only live here in this forest?" I asked.

"You noticed, I see. Do you see the patches of forests? We live there too. As for the rest of the sylphs, I have no idea where they are.

And it's not in writing, but the salamanders, the fire elves, live in a corner of a volcanic region to the west. I heard the undines, the water elves, have always been living in a city of water to the east, but... we haven't gotten any word from them in over 100 years. The gnomes, the earth elves, are situated in the northern mountains. In any case, communication would require that we encroach into man's domain, so it's not very convenient."

So communication between the various elves was nearly impossible.

"We'll have to focus our forces and create a breakwater then. Look here." I pointed toward the eastern region of the humans. "I don't know what it's called, but there's a human kingdom here. We need to set up a defense outside the forest here to protect the forest."

"A breakwater to keep them from going further," Shure said.

"Exactly, that's where I'll be building my kingdom. A kingdom extending from the forest to the plains."

Our kingdom will extend from the Fortress of the Abyss into the domain of man. We will be utilizing the resources of the forest to expel the wave of humans coming from the east and the south.

"The problem is the north then," Shure said.

I nodded.

After stealing a region from the humans, if we could just make one of the regions our ally, we would be able to greatly lessen the burden of defending. The north is not hostile to the elves, so we definitely need to acquire their support.

“I need information on the humans,” I said.

Actually, I could get some information from Shumea, but I wanted to get Shure’s information. Later, I’ll be able to see the veracity of elven intel.

“I’ll gather what I can. It’s already a bit late though, so—” Shure was saying when suddenly, some loud footsteps resounded from deep inside the house alongside a high-pitched voice.

What’s going on?”

“—! Dad!”

The door came swinging with great momentum, and then in the next moment, a little elven girl appeared.

“Dad I heard there’s a goblin here! Is it true!? Woah! It’s the real thing! It’s so big and black!”

I frowned at the noise.

What’s going on? I wordlessly asked Shure, but when I turned to him, this ever composed man was actually facing up the heavens with his palm covering his face.

“...Shunaria, we’re having a meeting right now, so if you’re going to play...” Shure said.

“Dad! I want to hear stories about goblins!”

“Shunaria!”

“I want to hear! I want to hear, so tell me a story!”

It seems even this seemingly perfect man has his own weakness.

Shure, don't look at me with that face. I'm not babysitting.

"Goblin King, lets end here for the day," Shure said.

"Alright. The embrace of the night god is almost upon us, after all," I said.

The way the girl looked at me reminded me of the way cats looked toward their prey.

What? The moment I thought that, she turned to Shure.

"I'm absolutely not giving up!" She declared then left.

"Sorry about that," Shure said, sighing.

I chuckled. "Don't mind, don't mind. I don't have any kids myself, but it seems fun."

"It's been really hectic lately. The elves need to be united, and there's so much to do, so I haven't been able to discipline her. Ah, forget it. I'm grumbling."

Feeling a strange sense of intimacy, I left Shure's house.

I need to instruct the goblins, so that shrew of a girl doesn't get hurt when she plays with them.

But still... Those eyes.

If those eyes were aiming for me... that's pretty amazing. There was a distance between me and Shure before she came, but when she did that distance suddenly got smaller.

Hmm... Interesting, I think I'll try talking to her once.

As the hour of the night god gradually descended, I returned to the goblins waiting outside the village.

—325 days until the war with the humans.

CHAPTER 123

WHISPERS OF THE ONE-EYED SNAKE

The world was still in the embrace of the night god, but the lingering image of a loving father was the only thing in my mind.

Embraced by the warmth of the night, I walked through the dark forest. The forest outside the elven territory was dangerous. If we let our guard down, we could end up prey to some wandering beast. But for some reason, despite knowing that, there was this odd warmth that sought to wrap itself around me.

“How strange,” I muttered.

The shaman, Gi Za Zakuend, might be able to uncover the cause of this strange atmosphere, but as for me, the most I can do is to keep it in mind.

It’s not a bad feeling though, and I’ve actually already gotten used to it by now. I walked through the forest of the night while filled with that strange sense of warmth.

“Blood and war is your path, little one. Neither fear it nor turn away from it.”

It’s been a while since Verid last spoke.

“Worried that I’ll stop fighting?” I asked.

“The old gods of the water and the forest live eternally. Their influence upon these lands is great, weakening the burn of the flame. It is uncomfortable.”

The snake spoke honestly. The other snake, the one whose mark was a gem on my left hand, seemed to agree with Verid as its mark quietly rumbled.

“I have already begun my path to domination. It is a bit too late to be turning away now.”

I have long been sick of this thirst for conquest within me. I want to win. I want to fight!

Those feelings blazed like a great flame within me as I spoke to Verid.

“I will take back that which was taken from me. Until then I will crush everything in my path.”

“Little brother, don’t forget. The Goddess of the Underworld is both our mother and master.”

Lady Altesia

The calm feeling within me changed, and the smile of a beast appeared on my face.

“It doesn’t matter who it is. If someone stands in my path, I will cut them down. I won’t care even if they’re gods.”

Good... Good! That is how you should be. Don’t forget, little one. The words I, the guiding black flames, have given you. Don’t ever forget.”

Verid’s laughter resounded loudly along with the squirming of the snake symbol on my arm, then his voice vanished.

Remembering the words I said just moments ago, I muttered to myself. “I will take you back. No matter the cost...”

Those words vanished in the dim light of the night.



Altesia sweetly smiled as she watched the goblin reflected on the giant magic mirror.

“He conquered the demihumans, and now, his claws reach for the elves. Unexpected... Truly, unexpected,” Altesia said to the one-eyed snake, Verid.

“The barrier of the forest and water gods have indeed been strengthened. It would be difficult for anyone to enter without the invitation of the elves,” Verid said.

The Goblin King’s decision to send an elven envoy was correct. The elven forest had a barrier around it that led intruders astray. There was no other way through it outside of burning the whole forest down.

The fact that the Goblin King was able to get past that without even knowing of its existence was truly nothing more than his good luck.

“Are the water ^{Iren} god and the forest ^{Chenzhen} god interfering on the elves’ behalf?” Altesia asked.

“They seem to be keeping a low profile... But they’re not dead,” Verid said.

“Hmm... The apostle of that which is ^{Gawyn} faster than the was refused contact with the forest god. Are they trying to gather their strength? If so why?” Altesia wondered as she smiled that ever alluring smile of hers.

Verid answered. “Perhaps it is because they’re lacking faith? The forest god experienced much anguish at the humans’ attack on the forest, and the water god’s body is being polluted. Wouldn’t all these be enough to weaken their strength?”

“Verid, it is forbidden to make light of the gods.”

“As you command.”

It was precisely because they gave in to their emotions and fought in the last war that they were driven into the abyss in the end.

“But if your deduction is correct, I might be able to pull something.”

“Shall I attempt contact with the spirits?”

The gods might be called gods, but they were not capable of accomplishing much by themselves, so they distributed their power and created spirits, who served as the gods’ representatives and carried out various functions regarding the maintenance of the world. For example, they took care of the land, created barriers, maintained the climate... and so on.

Once, the elves were proficient at hearing the words of the spirits, and they worked with other races to comprehend the language of the spirits. After the war of the gods, the ability was lost, but it was not fully extinguished, as fragments of this skill remain scattered throughout the world. Some came to be known as cursed swords or evil swords, some as great treasures, some as secrets of the royal treasury, some were

hidden among the sages of the old forest, and some were passed down as knowledge by the giants, generation after generation.

“Yes, I’ll leave it to you,” Altesia said to the bowing snake.

Altesia laughed. “I never thought the goblins would make me this happy. Maybe I’ll give them some of my strength.”

The more she liked them, the more freely she would give out her power. Though her love ran deep, her jealousy burned just as bright; the goddess of the underworld narrowed her eyes.

“...The ^{Gawain}Wingless Sky Snake and ^{Perseval}Earth-Devouring Serpent should be making a move soon.”

The household of the goddess of the underworld that once antagonized the whole world. Right now, its members were lurking in the shadows, waiting for the day they would once again let loose the dogs of war.

“If the goblins wish for it, I don’t mind becoming their mother,” Altesia said.

When the mother god, Deetna, fell into the abyss, the monsters were born. To this day the abyss was full of monsters born from the mother god.

The mother god was the master of the abyss and the mother of the fallen; uncountable hordes of monsters followed her.

Altesia, her successor, inherited all those. Monsters, beasts, snakes... This being the case, she did not mind if she became the master of these monsters, even those who were abandoned above the land.

“...If master wishes for it, I will use my strength,” Verid said as the golden gleam from his master’s eyes shot at him. “However, it could be said that the motherless monsters and the current goblin king are what they are because they have no gods.”

Altesia turned her powerful gaze back to the magic mirror.

“True. Just having them nearby isn’t love, is it?” Altesia folded her hands and

bewitchingly smiled.

“We shall begin our preparations,” Verid said, withdrawing from Altesia’s presence at her nod.

“With that much ability, I don’t mind letting you lead the monsters above the ground, but... You might want to hurry, boy.”

The image reflected on the mirror changed. This time what was reflected on it was not the image of a goblin but of humans.



“Make the moats 2 to 5 meters deep! Make sure those anti-cavalry fences are properly buried!”

The powerful voice of human commanders could be heard resounding here and there. The humans were currently building a colonial city on the boundary of the forest, between the goblins’ home and the human region.

After making camp and surrounding it with anti-cavalry fences, the humans planned out where the moats would go. When they did, they quickly planned out the rest of the colonial city.

Of course, the humans knew that the monsters could attack while they were building the colonial city, so the feudal lord of the west, Gowen, had his men and some adventurers patrol. While they stayed alert, the craftsmen working on the city worked day in and day out. The resources and the food were sent everyday from the western capital, Jirata, in which the western feudal lord himself lived.

The first thing they created were the stone walls, which blocked the vision of their would-be intruders and demarcated the land.

The technique they used to fill the gaps of the bricks with cement was something unimaginable to the goblins. That being said, while it was called a ‘wall’, it was really more like rocks piled atop each other without any order.

The assassin, Gi Ji Arsil, who went out to scout watched on from the dark of the night.

“What is that?” Gi Ji Arsil muttered.

No matter how much he stretched out his hands, the seemingly endless walls were at least 2 times his height. Moreover, in front of them were dry moats wide enough that the goblins wouldn't be able to jump across them. From time to time, the humans would line up wooden shields atop the walls while people passed.

“Lord Gi Ga was right.”

Those walls could probably stand even a full-body tackle from the orcs. Gi Ji Arsil did not know what those walls were, but he knew they were something to be wary of.

The Fortress of the Abyss was by no means tall. Instead, it went deeper down beneath the ground. To the goblins who did not fear the dark, this was most preferable, but to the humans, creating their fortresses above the land, reaching up as high as they could was most preferable.

Gi Ji Arsil did not understand this difference in perspective, so when he saw the giant fortress, he could only imagine how much bigger it was under the ground, rousing his sense of danger to the limits.

“They said not to use this except for emergencies, but...”

In Gi Ji's hand was the corpse of an unlucky bird, which he received from the Gordob's priestess, Kuzan. This was a priceless treasure that allowed one to send word to the Fortress of the Abyss. It was something the Gordobs went through great lengths to create.

“I believe now is that time.”

After speaking some words to the unlucky bird, he hit the corpse on its head, then in the next instant, the supposedly dead bird suddenly came to life, spreading its wings and flying in the sky.

“The king instructed us not to leave the forest, but the situation calls for it.”

The humans were brazenly building a fortress right in front of their eyes. This was clearly a provocation. Could they really just let this fortress be built?

“No... For the sake of the king, this thing must not be built.”

Gi Ji waited for the night god’s embrace to cover the world before exiting the forest, then picking out the time when the watch fires were being lit, he weaved through the darkness and approached the fortress.



“How was the meeting?” A voice asked.

Fenit Symphoria used the elven road on his way back home. When he arrived, a voice called out to him. It was his female cousin; the one who left the forest before.

“Hmph, it was a waste of time. To think Goblins would... It was truly a fool’s babble,” Fenit sneered.

The Tranquil Forest (Symphoria) was one of the more notably bigger forests to the south of the elven region, which was a great desert filled with yellow sand and rocks.

“About Selena...” Pale said.

“Ah, sorry, senior sister. I forgot,” Fenit replied.

“What do you mean you for—”

“I’m a busy man.”

Fenit seemed happy to see Pale biting her lips.

It was then that the elves who worked at his house came out to greet him.

“Is the food ready?” Fenit asked.

“Yes, Master Fenit. Everything has been prepared,” a servant elf said.

Seeing the servant elves excessively flatter him brought much joy to Fenit. With a satisfied smile, Fenit left Pale behind.

“Oh, if I feel like it, I might look up that girl, Selena. I’ll have to go to the Rustling Forest

(Forni) again anyway,” Fenit said.

“Really?” Pale said, expectant.

“Of course. In fact, why don’t I look her up while having my meal?”

Pale nodded while biting her lips.

She did not have any power left in this village. She had lost all of her connection during the time she spent outside as an adventurer. No matter how mortifying or sad her situation became, she would have no choice but to obey the sage, Fenit.

—324 days until the war with the humans.



The Goblin King’s skills have changed.

The skill, Instinct, has evolved to Warrior’s Instinct.

Warrior’s Instinct

Dodge fatal attacks. Takes effect against enemies up to one class higher than one’s own.

When leading a horde, you will know when your enemy is about to crush your horde.

New skill learned.

Guided One

Your fortune will turn for the better as you fulfill the wishes of your patron gods (source of divine protection).

The divine protection you have will grow stronger and your ether will grow greater the more you oppose the will of the gods your patron gods are antagonistic to.

CHAPTER 124

ELF PRINCESS

Weaving through the dark of the night to approach the forest, Gi Ji Arsil saw the giant fields being cultivated on the other side of the walls. Gi Ji's eyes opened wide. These were the same fields that Mattis once plowed at the Gi Village, but they were much bigger. Gi Ji did not fully grasp the importance of these giant fields, but he knew that their being here was not a good thing. On top of that, there were no trees past the walls. The land was being changed to fit the humans.

It had only been a meager 40 days since the king swore an oath with the humans not to fight, yet the humans had already changed the land to this extent. The ability of the humans to accomplish so much in so little greatly shook Gi Ji.

"As expected..."

The humans had no intentions of keeping their promise with the king; they would not wait until the promised time.

Gi Ji believed the humans needed to be weakened before they could set up a foothold here, but was this really the right choice? Gi Ji wasn't sure. While Gi Ji was caught up in his thoughts, he heard the footsteps of a human clad in armor.

Gi Ji took out his dagger and stifled his presence.

"...Who goes there?" The soldier asked to Gi Ji, who was currently concealing himself.

Gi Ji did not have the time for doubts. If he just ran away like this, there wouldn't be any point to him sneaking here in the first place.

He had to at least cross swords with the enemy.

Thinking that, Gi Ji decided to cut down a soldier first before running away.

As Gi Ji jumped out quietly, the soldier took out his sword. Sparks flashed as their weapons clashed.

“Identify yourself!” The man asked again.

Gi Ji’s surprise attack had failed. Cold sweat slid down his back.

“Enemy attack!” The soldier cried.

Sensing the human soldiers gathering, Gi Ji concluded that there was no point to further fighting.

It was unfortunate, but he had to retreat. Scouting out the enemy was one thing, but if he were to fall to the humans here, then he would truly be throwing mud on the king’s orders. Gi Ji made a run for it.

He weaved through the darkness, dodging the arrows that came his way, then he jumped for the stone wall. His hands raised him up, and within a single breath, he managed to get past the walls. But before he could get down, an arrow managed to find its way into his back.

Pain jolted through his body, but he didn’t have the time to writhe. He dragged his body back to the forest.



The night was still dark when I decided to make my way back to the goblin camp. Along the way I felt someone watching me. When I turned around, there was no one, only the presence of a person under the countless shadows of the trees.

An assassin?

No, the killing intent is too weak. I wanted to move my body anyway, so I decided to run toward that presence.

“Who are you?”

Unsheathing the long sword by my waist, I gradually closed in on that presence. But then arrows came shooting at me from the gaps between the trees.

“Tch!?”

Shifting my body to the side to dodge the arrows, I ran toward the direction the arrows came from. I swung my sword to cut away the branches blocking my path. When the path was cleared, several more arrows came shooting at me. My eyes worked well even in the dark, but it was still a challenge to dodge arrows coming from the shadows of the leaves. The most I could do was knock down those arrows with my sword.

After knocking the arrows down, I felt the presence move toward the part of the forest where there were giant trees. I didn't have a way to attack from a distance, so I had to near the presence first before I could win. I knew I was at a disadvantage, but I still pursued.

“—!”

There were countless trees between me and that presence. There was no guarantee the arrows would even hit me, but—

Sparks flashed as my sword knocked down another arrow. I couldn't see the face of this mysterious person, but I'm starting to have an idea who this is. When the person ahead turned around for a moment, two arrows were nocked at the same thing. That was an elven technique.

“—Winds!”

When I heard a spell chanted, a strong wind came blowing from up ahead. When I looked up a small figure was flying.

Planning on running!?

“My body is like a cloud of dust”
Accel

I blew up ether behind me as soon as I saw my mysterious assailant flying.

Reach him!

I was about to swing my sword, but when I saw the frightened face of my mysterious assailant, I stretched out my arms instead and boxed the ears of the small elf, then I looked toward our would-be landing spot, which was a giant tree.

“Nu!?”

That’s not good! For a moment, the future of us crashing into the giant tree flashed through my mind.

“Winds^{Wind Break} protect me!” The little elf chanted, causing a wind to blow us away from the tree, safely down to the ground.

“Well then, what excuse do you have, little girl?” I said.

“How about thanking me first,” she said.

I thought it was a familiar face, but as it turns out, it’s Shure’s daughter. If I recall correctly, her name is—

I asked the little elf with my sword pointed at her. Unlike when I first met her, her gaze was as calm as a tranquil lake. Is this the real her?

“While you did save me just now, didn’t you also attack me a while ago?” I said.

“But I wasn’t aiming for your life!” The girl inflated her cheeks and pouted. “I just wanted to see how strong you were—”

She went quiet as I moved my blade across her skin.

“You know a joke like that wouldn’t fly, right?” I said.

If I put just a little bit more power into my sword, blood would begin to drip from her skin. Wanting to know someone’s strength is something only an equally strong person has the right to say. A girl who doesn’t know her place doesn’t have the right to say those words.

Such conceit wouldn’t do for us goblins or even the elves.

I should kill her while no one is watching.

“You’re serious, huh,” she said.

The girl seems to have noticed my resolve as she looked me in the eye.

“We don’t have the luxury not to be, after all. The humans are approaching and my dream is still far off. It would be absurd to think I have the time to play around.” A brutal smile appeared on my lips as I said that. No, that wasn’t a brutal smile but one of self-derision.

I didn’t have the time to play, and yet I actually hesitated to kill this girl. No matter how beautiful, enemies must be put to death.

I have an intrinsic fear toward beautiful things. Or perhaps it’s only a lingering effect of the fear I felt from Altesia’s beauty.

A beauty so great that it felt like I would lose myself. This girl is still lacking compared to her, but she is plenty beautiful.

“...In that case, I apologize, Goblin King.”

“That’s not enough. Aside from your apology, I need to be recompensed as well.”

The girl sighed. “I’ve heard of your kind before, but... You really are greedy.”

“We do not have anything; therefore, we are greedy.”

The girl became thoughtful for a moment, then she spoke. “Then how about I give you myself?”

“...Excuse me?”

The girl knitted her brows as she looked me straight in the eye. Those eyes were not lying.

“Rather rude, aren’t we? I’ve thought it through, you know. My father will be forming an alliance with you soon, correct?” The girl said.

I nodded.

“Then in that case, you’re going to need something better as proof of trust. Something

better than mere words: action. If you take me as your bride, the elves will surely never betray you, and the goblins will prosper.”

A marriage to form an alliance. In human words this is what you would call a ‘political marriage’. This is one way to go about things, indeed. In fact, it was used many times in the past, a testament to its efficacy.

The only problem is whether this girl is saying this on her own accord.

“Did Shure tell you to say that? In order to make us easier to control?” I said provokingly.

He seemed like a doting father, but that might have been an act.

“The sylphs of the Rustling Forest (Forni) have not fallen so!” The girl said those words quietly but there was a strong will behind them.

She’s serious then?

“I may only be a little girl, someone who can’t even attend the sage’s council and ignorant of matters pertaining to other countries, but I won’t lose to anyone when it comes to my love for my home.”

Her glare remained on me, unmoving. No, it’s moving a little, but she’s doing her best to hide that. She’s not too bad, I suppose.

“Hmm... I’ll accept your apology, but I can’t take you as wife,” I wryly smiled as I thought of Reshia’s unhappy face.

“What a haughty goblin! Don’t you know goblins normally wouldn’t have a chance to marry an elf!?”

True, elves certainly wouldn’t ever consider a goblin as spouse material.

“Right. Anyway, don’t pull this sort of prank again. Warn the other kids too if you can.”

I sheathed my sword, but the girl seemed to have no intentions of leaving as she just sat there on the ground.

“What’s wrong? Aren’t you going to go home?”

“I can’t stand up,” the girl said, her face red with embarrassment though she tried to hide it.

Seeing her like that gives one a feeling of superiority, but it didn’t change the fact that I now had to do something troublesome. Sighing, I picked the girl up.

“...This is humiliating,” she complained as she stifled her cries.

“There’s nothing unsightly in standing tall despite your fears. Although the reasons for your predicament aren’t praiseworthy, you being able to negotiate with me is. Being able to survive an encounter against someone strong is to be praised.”

“To think a goblin would console me...”

Well, she is being carried; a little embarrassment can’t be helped.

“But... thank you,” she said.

“It’s something laudable. Be proud of it.”

Shunaria honestly nodded.



“I take it everything is ready?”

Several people were gathered in a dark room.

“Yes. We’ve made contact.”

“Then...”

When those words briefly ended, the figures vanished in the shadows.

A few days later, the alliance of the Rustling Forest (Forni) and the Windy Forest (Gastair) with the goblins was announced throughout the whole sylph forest.

The elven citizens who had no idea what was going on were greatly rattled.

“Have they lost their minds? The wise and honorable Forni actually formed an alliance with the likes of goblins!?”

“A goblin of all things? Demihumans I’d still understand to some extent, but goblins!? Has Falun Gastair gone senile!?”

Chaos and confusion spread among the elves.

“Impossible! What is Shure and Falun thinking!” Fenit Symphoria’s fertile body shook waves as he slammed his fist on the desk. His elven retainers could only look down on the ground as they waited for their master’s wrath to pass.

“Say something! What is going on!?”

No one could raise their head to answer their angry master’s question.

“Useless! Call the Sages’ Council. On my name, Fenit Symphoria, I will not permit this alliance with the goblins! We are the proud and noble elves, for crying out loud!”

“I-I’ll send a messenger at once then,” an elven retainer said with shaking voice before rushing out the door.

After the retainer elf left, this time Pale entered.

“Fenit! What’s going on? Forni has formed an alliance with the goblins?” She asked.

“It’s as you’ve heard. That bastard, Shure Forni, has lost his mind! As the still sane ones, we must have him executed!”

“Can you win?”

Even Pale has heard of Shure Forni’s greatness.

“Can I win? Is that something you need to ask!? Ha! Enough fool’s talk, please. Is there any reason to lose? There is no reason this Fenit Symphoria could possibly lose to some mad elf who formed an alliance with the likes of goblins, is there?”

Pale didn't think so, however. A battle between elves was still a battle.

The elves did not have much experience with large-scale battles. If the war were to be fought solely of neophytes, the result would be up to luck, but Shure has allied himself with the goblins.

Back when Pale was still living with the humans, she heard of how the holy knight, Gene, met his untimely demise in the Forest of Darkness, the area east of where they sylphs lived. Somehow, Pale didn't think things would go so smoothly.

"Alright." Pale bit her lips and left the raging Fenit to himself. Right now she would have to fight for Fenit.

"I'll have to do what I can," she muttered.

She would have to visit her old friends and reach out to some decent elves.

"Selena... Please be safe."

Shaking off the foreboding feelings haunting her, her beautiful face gradually turned into that of a warrior.

—320 days until the battle with the humans.

INTERMISSION

GI GI'S BEAST HORDE

Status	
Name	Gi Gi Orudo
Race	Goblin
Level	14
Class	Noble
Possessed Skills	Track; Throw Projectile; Axe Mastery C-; Sloppy Eater; Jeer; Tacit Understanding; Ancient Beast Tamer; Beast Trainer; Cooperation; Friend of the Horde; Bug Eater
Divine Protection	None
Attributes	None
Subordinate Beasts	Triple Head

Since the king sent Gi Gi Orudo away, he has been going wherever he pleased, taking along any beast he found along his way. Gi Gi did not catch the beasts he found, however, and instead used the skill, Tacit Understanding, to make the beasts friendly and follow him on their own accord. Like this Gi Gi eventually managed to have a horde of beasts following behind him.

Thorn Dog, a large-sized beast with thorn-like fur. Big Eye, a bird with multi-colored feathers arranged in the shape of an eye. Mirage, a monkey that could fade into its surroundings. Thorn Fox, foxes whose fur would stand up like thorns when threatened. Dragon Turtle, a kind of turtle that could eventually become over 5 meters big, though currently, it was only 1 meter big.

Gi Gi took his horde of beast and headed toward a swamp.

Snow fell heavily on the distant mountains of the snow god. Gradually, the snow built up from the crossroads toward the foot of the mountains.

Damp clouds from the south crashed into the giant mountains of the snow god, showering rain over the foot of the mountains. Water permeated the ground, reaching

deep under ground, as a great stream passed above ground, down toward the Forest of Darkness.

The bountiful rain and the warm climate has – for many millenia – shaped the great forests, causing much change to the beasts living in them.

After receiving the king's orders, Gi Gi headed straight up to the north, where the humidity was high and the marshlands, which the beasts loved, were many.

When Gi Gi thought of all the beasts waiting for him, excitement filled him.

He shivered every time he thought back to the king's words.

"We must become stronger. Henceforth, go to the north and increase your horde.

Gi Gi thought back to the king's words as he looked around his surroundings.

"The king is truly great. He even allowed me to do as I please," Gi Gi muttered.

Gi Gi interpreted the king's command to increase his horde as taming more beasts. What a generous king indeed to allow his subordinate to happily tame more beasts.

Of course, the king actually intended for him to gather goblin subordinates, but Gi Gi completely missed that part.

Gi Gi looked around him as he happily hummed.

Meanwhile, the triple head he was riding on was whispering to itself.

What do you think? The leftmost head asked.

I think he's got this whole thing wrong. The middle head said.

Isn't there anything to eat? The rightmost head said as it searched its surroundings.

In the end, since they wouldn't be disadvantaged in any way, the leftmost head and middle head stopped bothering about Gi Gi's misunderstanding, and they searched the surroundings for some food just like the rightmost head.

“Is that...” Gi Gi muttered, causing all eyes to gather.

The area up ahead was a swamp. The grasses were moist and on the rotting woods were moss growing. Vines hung from the branches up above that blocked the light of the sun, wrapping themselves around trees, obstructing one’s vision. It was in such a place that Gi Gi saw something mysterious, causing him to open his eyes wide in shock.

As the wind blew, a jellyfish floated aimlessly above the swamp.

Gi Gi carefully observed the jellyfish, while the beasts behind him gulped.

Half the jellyfish’s body was transparent as it floated over the center of the swamp.

After a while the jelly fish floated elsewhere, whereupon the grass underneath it quickly grew.

“Shall we go after it?” Gi Gi asked.

But the three heads shook their heads. Even the rightmost head, who was always eager to eat, refused. The beasts knew how dangerous getting stuck in a swamp was.

For some reason though, the jellyfish suddenly floated next to Gi Gi.

If Gi Gi just stretched out his hand, it seemed like he would be able to reach it, but there was still a chance to fall into the swamp.

Gi Gi’s patience was running thin as he waited, but the jellyfish just floated elsewhere again.

“Mmm...”

Unfortunately, the jellyfish was out of reach. The only way to reach it was to traverse the swamp, but Gi Gi had no way of doing so.

When Gi Gi looked down to the ground where the jellyfish had floated over before, he noticed there were some grass there. The grass was young and lustrous. Picking it up, he ordered his beasts to go around the swamp, onwards to the north.



Gi Gi's beast horde gradually grew bigger as he proceeded to the north, but then they came across an unexpected but troublesome issue.

"GEGOo!" A newly added big eye cried, but behind that big eye were three other big eyes.

"GEGOo!" They cried.

When the big eye with a bigger eye pattern than the other big eyes cried, these three new big eyes cheered.

"Wait," Gi Gi asked to the big eye that joined the earliest with his Tacit Understanding Skill. "Why are there more of you?"

Apparently, the female big eyes seemed troubled, so they wanted to bring them along.

"Even though I'm single... Sigh... I know you need them to reproduce, but still... Hmm? They were chased away, so they don't have a place? Hmm..."

Gi Gi was hesitant to agree, but when he saw the poor big eyes crying at the back, he couldn't help but give in. Because of that, though, Gi Gi couldn't say no when the mirages and the thorn foxes asked to take along some of their own females.

"No more! No more!" Gi Gi cried.

But...

"Ki ki ki!"

"Fushu!"

The mirages and the thorn foxes cried foul.

The big eyes were allowed to take their female; not just one, but three too! So in the end, Gi Gi had no choice but to acquiesce.

"Hmm... Fine, but you'll keep your females to just three then, alright?"

Gi Gi's goal was to increase his horde's strength. He had no intentions of running a charity; adopting every troubled beast along the way was out of the question.

In the next few days, the number of dragon turtles had increased to three. The only one without a partner was the thorn dog.

"Sigh... You're the only one left who can understand me," Gi Gi said to the thorn dog, though for some reason the thorn dog unnaturally avoided his gaze.

"Oh no..." Gi Gi said.

"Woof..." The thorn dog's tail dropped as its ears drooped and its thorn-like fur softened like withered leaves.

"Sigh... Well go on. Call them," Gi Gi said.

They've gotten this far already; what was there to fear? It's not like three more dogs would be an issue.

"Woof..." The thorn dog barked.

"What's the matter? I won't get mad, so just call them already," Gi Gi said.

But what happened next made Gi Gi drop his jaws.

The number of thorn dogs that appeared was 10.

"Didn't I say just three?" Gi Gi asked.

When he looked closer, he noticed over half of them were pups.

"Don't tell me..." Gi Gi braced himself.

"Woof!" The dog happily barked.

"What do you mean you couldn't help it!? What are we going to do with all these pups!?" Gi Gi complained.

"Woof!" Like this, the thorn dog said.

The female thorn dogs were all big. They carried their pups and placed them over their back and approached Gi Gi.

“Kuun, kuun,”

“GUnunu...”

Then they made themselves as pathetic as they could as they begged Gi Gi to let them stay.

Sorry, boss. The male thorn dog said with a sorry appearance as its harem licked its face.

It's alright, dear. I'm sure your boss won't trouble you. Our children has no where else to go, so... The female thorn dogs said to the male thorn dog.

Normally, it wouldn't be possible to hear their thoughts, but because of the Taciturn Understanding Skill that Gi Gi had, he unfortunately had to hear this pitiful exchange.

“Kuun, Kuun!” To make things worse, the pups kept on crying.

“Enough! I get it already! I hope you realize we're going to war, though!” Gi Gi said.

The thorn dog happily barked back. “Woof!” *Boss!*

“Ki ki ki!” The mirages (invisible monkeys) clapped their hands.

“GEGOo!” The big eyes flapped their wings.

“FUSHuu!” The thorn foxes jumped up and down.

“...” The dragon turtles walked as slow as ever and gave only a sleepy glance, but regardless, all the members of Gi Gi's beast horde gave their blessings to the thorn dogs.

Unfortunately, Gi Gi forgot one crucial thing.

To allow one was to allow all.

Because of that Gi Gi ended up having to build an enclosure on the backs of the dragon turtles for the newborn animals.



As Gi Gi's horde of beasts steadily grew in number, he finally managed to find some goblins. Gi Gi's goal had always been to multiply his beasts, but he also understood that the king wished for him to gain more strength for the impending battle with the humans.

Having more goblins would only benefit them.

Unfortunately, the moment the goblins, who had left their horde to hunt, saw Gi Gi, they immediately ran. It was only a given though, since Gi Gi's horde currently consisted of 24 thorn dogs, 13 big eyes, 6 dragon turtles, 10 thorn foxes, and 7 mirages (invisible monkeys).

"Shall we give chase?" Kicking on the triple head he rode upon, Gi Gi led his beast horde on a chase for the goblins.

When Gi Gi managed to catch some of the goblins, he found out where they lived. Gi Gi thought he would talk to these new goblins to convince them to join the king, but unfortunately for him, the goblins in the village were scared out of their wits.

A giant goblin led a horde of beasts, many of which fed upon goblins.

When the goblins saw such a sight, it was only a given that they wouldn't spare a word, and instead run for their lives.

"GI, GI GI-!?" The foreign goblins ran back to their village, crying, causing the rare goblin boss of their tribe to make an appearance. But when this rare goblin saw Gi Gi and his horde of beasts, he lost all feeling in his legs.

"What's the matter?" Gi Gi asked.

The rare goblin was sat on his buttocks, his sword on the ground, as Gi Gi stopped in front of him.

Behind Gi Gi was his horde of beasts, ready to attack at a moment's notice. The thorn dogs were salivating. The mirages (invisible monkeys) had armed themselves with sticks and giant rocks. The multi-colored birds – which the goblins here had never seen before – had spread their wings, making themselves look as threatening as possible. The thorn foxes' thorns looked painful as they stood up. And on the back of the giant dragon turtles were enclosures, in which several small beasts howled.

I'm going to be eaten! The rare goblin thought.

"Become my subordinate, or else—" Gi Gi thought of threatening the goblin, but before he could even finish—

"Please! Let me be your subordinate! Just don't eat me! I beg you!" The rare goblin cried.

Gi Gi hadn't even unsheathed his axe, so he couldn't help but raise his brows when he saw the enemy goblin offer himself.

"...You're not going to resist?" Gi Gi suspiciously asked.

"I won't! I absolutely won't!" The enemy goblin cried desperately.

"Hmm."

Well, I suppose there are days like this too. Gi Gi thought, then he conquered the village.

"Take care of the beasts," Gi Gi ordered. "Then I want to know whether there are other goblins and orcs around."

Gi Gi's trip had just begun.



Gi Gi Orudo's level has risen.

14 => 35

Track

Success rate increased when pursuing enemies.

Throw Projectile

Damage increased when throwing projectiles.

Sloppy Eater

Can eat even plants with poison.

Jeer

Attack power UP, defense power UP, speed DOWN.

Tacit Understanding

Can communicate with beasts.

Ancient Beast Tamer

Can tame more beasts.

Beast Trainer

Can train even non-combat beasts.

Cooperation

Cooperation with allies gains a bonus.

Friend of the Horde

When fighting together with beasts, the strength of the surrounding horde is increased.

Bug Eater

Attack damage increased when fighting against bug-type monsters.

Tl Note:

Omnivorous -> Sloppy Eater. Skill description doesn't match with omnivorous, so I changed it. Sylvie says KmF will be posted this week.

CHAPTER 125

A YOKE THAT LEADS TO THE FUTURE

“What are you scheming?” I asked, my voice tinged with displeasure.

The sylph sitting before me sternly met my gaze.

“I wish to unite the elves,” Shure said.

“You want to become king?” I asked.

The king of elves, huh.

“You jest. The highest authority among us elves is the sage’s council. A lone ruler would not be accepted.”

This village doesn’t really seem against the idea, though, but regardless, it seems this man has no intentions of becoming king.

“Master Shure, written protests have come from the other forests—!” An elf said as soon as he entered the room, but when he saw me, he stopped.

“Continue,” Shure said, prompting the elf to continue.

Apparently, the other elven forests had announced their stand against Forni’s decision to ally with the goblins.

“Master Fenit Symphoria of the sage’s council has called for a meeting. The other forests will be attending...” The secretary-like elf was quivering, but Shure was as calm as spring rain.

“This is still within our expectations. Without a strong medicine we sylphs will never be born again. What did the Windy Forest say?” Shure said calmly.

The elf straightened up his back and looked down on the letter in his hand.

“Master Falun will be supporting Master Shure,” the elf read.

“Good, then. Let the branches of the forest know that if they support me, they must gather together with their bows and quivers.”

That was undoubtedly a declaration of war.

“...Milord, won't you think this over again?” The elf said after glancing at me once. “What meaning is there in shedding blood amongst elves? So long as we're able to live in the forest...”

The elf knew what he was saying was an affront to me, but he said his piece anyway. It seems the elves hold Shure in regard.

“Fei, you are a brilliant elf, but if we elves remain the way we are today, we will not be able to avoid a calamity 100 years later.”

A century was still within the lifetime of an elf. In fact, it could be said to be a short period considering they themselves could live well over 200.

“Right now we must shed blood and resist the tyranny of the humans. If we don't fight while we have allies, only a future of slavery awaits us,” Shure said while looking at me. “I do not wish to see such a shameful future for our proud descendants... even if it means shedding the blood of my brethren.”

Shure seems young from the outward, but it seems he's already lived past a hundred years.

“Fei, gather our brethren,” Shure said, still looking at me, his gaze growing sterner as the secretary-like elf left. “With this things have turned exactly as you've wished. We will be going to war together.”

“I would have liked to fight alongside the whole elven race, though,” I said.

“You ask too much, but... Yes, I will see what I can. There is nothing pleasant in shedding a brother's blood.”

“A moment ago, you mentioned the sage's council being the highest authority, and yet... Here you are defying it. Is that not a contradiction?”

“Let my name be tainted with shame if it must, but know that though I say it is the highest authority, it is not without flaw. After all, a king’s directive is still greater than the council’s,” Shure sighed. “But alas, desperate times call for desperate measures. If the council cannot arrive at an answer on how treat the goblins, then I will give them an answer. Merely delaying the issue settles nothing.”

So he is willing to carry this shame, is he? Ironically, despite that admirable spirit of his, the more confident he is in this decision, the more he spits on the credibility of that so-called council.

“Now then, friend. The stage is exactly as you’ve desired. What will you do?” Shure’s words were provoking, but his eyes were as calm as ever, looking only on the results.

“We will lend you our strength,” I replied. “That is why we came here, after all.”

Two days later, the warriors of the Rustling Forest and the goblins numbered 400 men strong as they marched toward the Tranquil Forest.



“Call the soldiers at once!” The moment the sages of Forni and Gastair declared war, Fenit’s loud voice resounded, calling for their elven armies.

“A war among elves?” Silver from the Forest of the Lost (Sheng) shook in fear. Being of small stature, he had to look up to Fenit.

Priena from the Silent Forest (Sinfall) was dubious, but he didn’t contest Fenit.

The slender Nash from the Whispering Forest (Jirad) sarcastically smiled as he asked. “Call the soldiers? And who’s going to lead them? The old veteran, Falun, isn’t moving, while the enemy is none other than the wise and honorable Shure. Exactly who is going to go against him? Hmm?”

“Are you scared? Of someone like him!? That won’t do, Lord Nash Jirad! That won’t do!” Fenit said.

“Hmph, I just don’t wish to see this alliance die meaninglessly,” Nash stared coldly at Fenit.

“Are you insinuating that to follow me is to walk to death!?” Fenit screamed in response.

Seeing the two argue, the small-statured Silver interjected. “U-Umm! Are we really going to battle!?”

Fenit clicked his tongue upon seeing Silver so perplexed. “Enough! I, Fenit, will dispose of them! The rest of you can just run back home to your forests and wait in fear!”

Because of the Elven Road there was a possibility for their territories to be attacked at any given time. The small Silver wasn’t the only one to shake at that thought.

“No, this is only because of our short-sightedness. Please, Lord Fenit, remember your noble heart and find it in yourself to forgive us,” Priena said, causing Fenit to snort before returning to his seat.

“It should be fine if Lord Fenit leads the army, right, Lord Nash?” Priena asked Nash, his eyes as cold as ever.

Nash smiled. “Yes, it should be fine. If Lord Priena is fine with it, then so be it.”

Priena and Nash understood each other’s intention.

By allowing Fenit and Shure to fight, they would be able to intervene later and act as an intermediary, giving them an advantageous position.

“Lord Falun seems to be quietly observing. If it’s just Shure, we should be able to manage,” Priena said, at which everyone nodded.

Though there were various differences between them, everyone was united in protecting their own positions.

“Since we’ve decided, give me the soldiers that returned just recently! Sinfall and Jirad should give me 200 each, while Sheng should give me 300 soldiers!” Fenit demanded.

“Why is my forest the only one who has to give 300?” Silver complained.

“Shut up! If you don’t agree, I’ll take you on along with Shure!”

“But...”

In the end, Silver couldn't argue any more, and he just muttered out a quiet 'Fine'.

“Should have said that from the start. Hmph!” Fenit said. “Well then, gentlemen. Send your soldiers 4 days later! Dismissed!”



The corpse of the unlucky bird flew high up in the sky, eventually landing over the roof of the Fortress of the Abyss two days after Gi Ji Arsil had invoked it.

When Kuzan received the message of the unlucky bird, she stiffened up almost as if her small, white body had been hit by a club, then she immediately went to the king's representative, Gi Ga Rax, the knight-class goblin.

His skin was a hue of deep red, and he had only an arm and a leg, along with a small horn over his head. The knight-class goblin was clearly different from the other duke class goblins. The small Kuzan looked up at his great stature filled with dignity.

“Lord Gi Ji has fallen into danger because of me. I must save him at once!”

Gi Ga Rax wielded his spear with his one arm, and then with the prosthetic leg gifted to him by a human friend, he jumped up onto his beloved steed, Hakuou.

“P-Please wait, Gi Ga. I don't think you should go!” Kuzan said.

“What? But I was the one who asked him to go. I must go!” Gi Ga argued.

“But I don't think the king would...”

Kuzan wondered. What would the king do? He would probably take on the humans head on, wouldn't he? That would be bad. At the very least, Gi Ga shouldn't try to fight the humans now.

“What about the king?” Gi Ga asked.

“Umm... No. What I mean is that the king ordered you to watch over the fortress;

therefore, he probably intends for you to defend it. So, you should send someone else to help Gi Ji,” Kuzan reasoned.

Right, Gi Ga nodded.

Kuzan added. “We mustn’t engage the humans needlessly. As much as possible, we should avoid anything that would lead to an all-out war. Going out there and forcefully dragging Gi Ji out of the mouth of the tiger would be a bad idea. Not to mention that it’s not exactly feasible.”

“Hmm...”

Sending a rare-class goblin out would just end up following whatever Gi Ji wants to do, so they decided on sending the tribal chiefs instead.

“How about Lord Aluhaliha of Paradua and Lord Gilmi of Ganra?” Gi Ga said.

“Very well,” Kuzan nodded, secretly relieved he didn’t consider Rashka.

“Then please send word to them at once.”

“I understand,” Kuzan said.

Gi Ga sighed as he watched Kuzan run off. “The king would have probably easily made this decision. Sigh... As I thought, I can’t be like the king.”

Sighing, he rode Hakuou to his subordinates to train them.

The most he could do now was to pray for Gi Ji’s safety as he ran about in the forest near the Fortress.

—318 days until the war with the humans.

CHAPTER 126

SYLPH UNIFICATION WAR I

With the unruly soldiers and the gradually approaching Rustling Forest (Forni), the goblin-elf coalition caused Fenit's mood to worsen by the day.

Fenit sought to gain support by visiting the other village through the Elven Road, but the walls the villages had erected interfered with the spell, preventing him from reaching them.

"Silver Sheng, Nash Jirad, even Priena! What is wrong with you? Have you been seized with fear!?" Fenit slammed the table as he yelled at the soldiers of Symphoria standing before him, not an elf looked up to meet his gaze. "How infuriating... Fine, if this is how they want to play it, we'll just have to go ourselves. I, Fenit, will open the eyes of the Forni myself! But before that I'll start with that brat, Silver! I'll show him the price of humiliating me!"

In his anger, Fenit ordered his men to march to the nearby Forest of the Lost (Sheng). His army numbered 500-men strong. There was no power in the hot sands of the southern desert able of contesting the elves, so the Tranquil Forest (Symphoria) had much room to grow. Fenit took roughly half of their great army.

The army included Pale, who was also an elf of Symphoria. Since returning to Symphoria, she has bowed her head countless times to strangers in her search for Selena; and in the end, she concluded that Selena must be with the goblins.

She would go to them now to prove her conclusions true, but she didn't think it feasible to grab Selena from right under the goblins' noses. Moreover, Forni had formed an alliance with the goblins. As far as they were concerned, she was an enemy. The Elven Road was not omnipotent.

Even if she manages to make contact with Selena, how would she escape with her?

To go by herself meant to move through enemy lines alone; the goblins and the Forni who have accepted them. Running away surely wouldn't be easy. Not to mention, Pale wouldn't even dream of taking an army alone, though it was precisely because she

understood her limits that she was cautious.

The first most important thing an adventurer must learn is to know one's limits.

After discerning what one can do and cannot do, one must then do his best according to those limits. Pale learned that after joining the Soar to Freedom Clan.

Using the same method, Pale concluded that the best way to meet Selen^{Elks}a was to move with Fenit's army.

"I'm not wrong, am I, Touri?" Pale muttered to herself, calling out the name of their leader as she rebuked herself for her weakness.

"So this is were you were," a voice called out from behind Pale as she was doing maintenance on her bow and quiver. When she turned around, a young elf her age was there.

"Felbi, what's the matter?" Pale said.

"...Nothing. I just wanted to see your face a bit," shrugged the elf who was one of the commanding officers of Symphoria's army. Felbi Anthra, though young he is an elf accomplished in both archery and magic. He is one of the friends that Pale still has contact with even after her long absence.

"Is Fenit still throwing a tantrum? Sorry about that. I'm his relative, so let me apologize in his place," Pale said.

"I haven't even said anything," Felbi said.

"You're making that face though."

"Alright, I give. You hit it right on the money," Felbi sighed as he sat beside Pale and worked maintenance on his short sword. As he rubbed his short sword made out of Srilana, he talked about Fenit. When he got to the part where Fenit ordered them to march to the Forest of the Lost, Pale raised her two well-shaped brows.

"It's not something to praise, but... I don't think he's wrong," Pale said.

“And I thought you’d surely be against it,” Felbi said, looking at Pale as if he was looking at someone for the first time.

“You might not want to hear this, Felbi, but I think the Goblin-Forni Alliance is a force to be reckoned with. Gathering numbers to overcome that isn’t a bad move; and since they agreed during the meeting, they should honor their promise... even if that promise was made due to a threat.”

“Because it’s the duty of the nobles, huh. Pretty harsh, aren’t we?”

In the end, negotiations were just tools executed upon the stage that is power. That was true for the humans; and it rings true even for the elves.

“But I guess it can’t be helped if we’re to defeat Forni,” Felbi sighed as he sheathed his short sword.

“Perhaps,” Pale agreed. “For the sake of peace.”

When they stood up and were about to bid each other farewell, the tumultuous noise of a violent wind and the sight of the chief’s roofs being blown away hit them.



They’re not attacking.

That’s something to be celebrated, I suppose.

This whole thing began because of Shure’s unexpected declaration of war, but it seems to be going exactly as he planned. Currently, our forces are marching together with the elves surrounding the goblins from the outside.

The road in the forest had been maintained well enough to allow even an army our size to go through. It wasn’t paved with stones, but it was wide enough to accommodate us; moreover, the needless stones have been removed and the land has been leveled.

I wanted to ask Shure why their roads were like this, but after seeing him busy dealing with all the reports, I decided to postpone the trivial questions for later. In fact, even the usually chattering goblin horde was acting as if they’d been forbidden from

talking.

When Shure finished hearing out the scouts' reports, I spoke to him. "Things sure are going smoothly. I thought for sure the other villages would attack you."

"We've already made our move. Right now, the other villages shouldn't even have the leisure of sending out their army."

Assassins? Shure was still free, so I asked.

"Did you have the other leaders assassinated?" I asked.

"No... Well, we've gotten this far so it shouldn't make any difference. There are other people among the sylph who share my misgivings; such elves aren't limited to those in my village," Shure said.

So he had those elves do something then? Did he tell them to attack? No, that would be too weak. A separate attack force isn't impossible, but he said the other villages won't even have the leisure of sending out their army, so it would have to be something even stronger than that.

"You incited a rebellion?"

"...Bingo."

Just a bit I saw a glimpse of what this man is worrying about. There were indeed people who share his misgivings in the other forests, but they were by no means many. Otherwise, he would have simply had the other chiefs exiled. The fact that he had to resort to a rebellion meant that he didn't have enough influence otherwise to cripple the other forests.

The only way to affect the other forests was for him to make a desperate move. A desperate move that would mean death if anything were to go wrong.

"We can go faster if you want," I said.

"But..." Shure said, hesitant.

"It's fine, we're used to wars. We're not pushing ourselves."

“...Thank you. Fei, order the army to go faster!”

Nodding, his secretary ordered the soldiers. “Elites of Forni! Let us make haste! There is no weakling among us only capable of moving so slowly!”

I raised my voice as well.

At that, the elves and the goblins both quickened their pace.

Like that we headed to the nearby Silent Forest (Sinfall).



Bui groaned when he saw the goblin that was brought to the village.

“Food!” The kobolds, on the other hand, demanded food as usual as they bit him by the legs.

“What to do, Bui? That goblin is that goblin’s subordinate, right? It’s black and big too,” Gui said.

Bui could only nod his head despite being troubled. “Let’s heal him first. Remove the arrow lodged into his back, then apply some herbs.”

“Wouldn’t that be bad? If he dies, it’ll be our fault,” Goi said as he quivered in fear.

Bui shook his head. “I think it would be worse if we just threw him away and did nothing. Even if he dies, it should be fine as long as we tried our best.”

Bui’s words gradually grew weaker until they were completely powerless by the end of his speech. Gui and Goi glanced at each other at that, then sighing, they carried the goblin into a house. It was a house made only out of wood and the skin of animals, but it was much better than nothing.

Washing the goblin’s wounds with water purified by Doralia, they rubbed some herbs on them to hasten their recovery. After that, all that was left was to wait for the goblin’s leaf-covered wounds to recover.

“Food!” Meanwhile, the kobolds were still clinging onto Bui. When he finally took out some meat, they started salivating.

“Aight, now you boys go over there-” Bui threw the meat away, causing the kobolds to run after it. It was then that someone called out to him.

“Bui! The goblin is awake!” When he turned around, he saw that it was Goi, who had come running out from inside the house.

Inside the house.

“...Ugh, bastards... you’re... orcs,” the goblin said, still clearly in pain.

Contrary the goblin’s seemingly hostile appearance, however, Bui was quite relieved to see him alive.

“Don’t worry, we won’t eat you,” Bui said.

“Bastards, I know... you... eat our kind!” The goblin said.

“I am Bui, the ruler of this orc village. I have no intentions of antagonizing your king.”

The blue goblin – the assassin, Gi Ji Arsil – groaned when he heard those words tinged with intelligence; that was something far too rare for the orcs.

“Anyhow, it should be far too difficult for you to be moving around, so just lie down and rest,” Bui said before leaving Goi behind to tend to the goblin, while he left with the others.

“It’s good he didn’t die. For the meantime, let’s observe him. He’s probably hungry, so we’ll have to feed him some meat,” Bui said as he ordered the other orcs and thought of the actions they would be taking.

The wounded goblins was found in the area the king gave them, the area south the lake. The arrow lodged into his back was exquisitely made, something far too difficult for the goblins and orcs.

That being said, the enemy was most likely human.

Had the humans invaded the forest once more? Or did the goblin come from outside the forest?

There was much to confirm.

“Gui, I have a request.”

The chief of the orc village began his own investigation.

—316 days until the war with the humans.

CHAPTER 127

SYLPH UNIFICATION WAR II

Tl Note: Correction, the goblin-elf army isn't heading to the Tranquil Forest (Symphoria) but to the Silent Forest (Sinfall). Also, the elves are around the goblins, not the other way around.

"Swordsmen forward!"

At Shure's behest, the melee soldiers moved up to the front. I thought for sure the elves would be attacking from a distance, preferring to use a bow and quiver, but contrary to my expectations, many of the elves were outfitted with a shield and sword. They bravely ventured out to the frontlines, where they climbed up the defensive walls erected to protect the village.

We encountered little resistance as we entered the Silent Forest (Sinfall). Arrows would be shot at us from time to time, but such half-hearted response could not stop the might of 400 warriors.

"Find Priena! Ignore the foddors!"

All men moved on foot, the elves forming the outer perimeter, while the goblins formed the heart of the formation. I ran side-by-side Shure, who ordered the swordsmen to push into the residence of the village chief. At the same time, he ordered to suppress the vital facilities. As expected, Shure is skilled. He even managed to gather enough information on the enemy beforehand.

If he didn't know where all the important facilities and what kind of army the enemy had we wouldn't be able to occupy the village so easily.

"The enemy chief, Priena Sinfall, has run away with 50 soldiers!" An elf reported.

"Where to?" Shure asked.

"To the south!"

I don't know if this is what they mean by 'when the gong is hit it echoes', but I decided to offer the chief's head as a present to decorate this victory.

"We'll pursue them," I said.

"Please," Shure said.

Hearing Shure agree, I ordered the goblins. "Riders of Paradua, ride ahead and stop the enemy! Archers of Ganra, Ru Rou shall lead you to support the riders of Paradua. Gi Jii take 40 and go with Shure. Everyone else follow me!"

Quickly ordering the soldiers, I filled my legs with ether and bolted off.

I chased after Priena with my sword at the ready.



As we left the village, we ran through the road going south.

I ran at the vanguard, leading the goblins behind me through the leveled road, while the beast-riders informed us that they had already made contact with the enemy through the archers of Ganra.

Directing ether to my ears to sharpen my hearing, I heard throes of pain and angry voices from up ahead.

"Hurry!" I ordered.

Unsheathing my sword, I stepped into the ground and bolted for the area up ahead.

"Your Highness, the enemy is up ahead!" Ru Rou, who had gone ahead, said.

I leapt as soon as I saw the opposing elven army.

Enchant
"Turn me into a blade!"

Black flames erupted from the base of the hilt, cladding the whole blade in black

ember as it descended with the force of gravity into an enemy elf.

Without even the time to cry out, the enemy elf was cleaved in two.

The surrounding elves were aghast upon seeing me, and not an eek came out of their lips. It didn't matter, though, because I was never one to let my enemies off lightly.

"GURUUuo00Aa00!" As I bellowed out the World-Devouring Howl, I swept at the surrounding elves with my long sword, lopping off their head and dyeing the ground in their blood.

After seeing me instantly kill the elves around me, the enemy finally woke up from their stupor and an enemy elf cried.

"Goblin!" The enemy cried. "Kill him!"

Too slow!

"Let my body^{Shield} be inviolable!"

The bow was at a disadvantage in a close-up fight, so the enemy elf put his bow away and unsheathed his dagger.

The enemy elf struck out with his dagger, but my Shield repelled it. The elves attacked from every direction, but I cut each and every one of them down easily, causing the enemy elves' face to twist in fright. There were some brave ones who still fought despite seeing my Shield, however.

"Don't look down on us, monster!!" An elf soldier cried as he jumped at me with his sword.

For some reason, I decided to dodge that one.

Good thing I did, as that sword of his managed to tear away a thin portion of my Shield's black flames. That weapon must be made out of the elves' special metals, either Srilana or Orichalcum.

In front of weapons like those, Shield is meaningless!

When the enemy attacked again, I met its weapon with my own, but unfortunately, its short sword actually cut into my sword.

What an insanely sharp weapon.

Jubilation filled the elf's face. Victory was his, he must've thought.

Stupid. If your weapon is stuck in mine, how are you going to dodge my next attack?

Releasing my long sword, I curled my hand into fist and slammed it into the happy elf's face. The sound of bones breaking resounded as the elf flew away, then I took out another sword by my waist and fixed my stance.

"S-Stay away from that—!" An elf cried as he sought to make some distance between us, but unfortunately, my sword found its way into his back before he could flee.

He was the only one I managed to kill, however, as the other elves safely managed to jump onto the branches of the trees nearby or hide in the bushes; they readied their bows.

That was fast. As expected of the elves who are said to be friends of the forest.

Unfortunately, they were too late. It might be because of their inexperience at war, but they moved a moment too late.

"Stop that goblin!" An elf ordered, at which the other elves all aimed their bows at me.

The elves were unequalled as hunters. Their bows were fast and strong, and they could instantly take down any prey they set their eyes upon.

"Fir—What!?" Just when the elves were about to shoot, the arrows of Ganra's archers came pouring down.

"Shoot down the elves away from His Highness!" The young commander of Ganra, Ru Rou, ordered.

The archers of Ganra were skilled hunters as well; therefore, the moment the elves decided to jump on top of branches, their fate was sealed. The only reason the archers

of Ganra refused to shoot was because I was nearby. Now that the elves had willingly distanced themselves from me, the Ganra could cover the sky in their arrows as they pleased.

Meanwhile, the goblins that had gone ahead came back and attacked. The fierce and powerful goblins of Gaidga slammed their clubs, each one as big as the elves themselves, into the slender bodies of the elven forces, while the wide-eyed Gi Jii charged with the normal goblins and their spear.

“R-Run!” The moment the elves cried out that word, our victory was secured.

A systematic retreat allows one to minimize casualties, but... This... This is just asking to be killed.

“After them! Take their heads!” I ordered as I watched the elves run away without any order.

The goblins cheered at my command; and in the end, about 40 of the 50 elves were slain.

Unfortunately, we couldn’t get Priena’s head.



Meanwhile, while Shure was invading the Silent Forest (Sinfall), the life and death battle that took place in Fenit’s residence ended.

Shure’s advocates had attacked Fenit.

Shure had many supporters even among Fenit’s guard; and because Fenit didn’t even consider the possibility, they managed to attack him. There were many among the commanding officers who shared Shure’s thoughts.

Fenit was completely blindsided when Shure’s faction attacked, but fortunately for him, luck was on his side. In Fenit’s fit of anger, he accidentally blew the roof off his residence, prompting Pale and the other warriors outside to enter his house, swaying the advantage back to Fenit’s side.

Pale and the other warriors asked Shure’s faction to surrender, but they ignored their

plea and fought until the last man. In the end, they all died.

“We can’t delay anymore! The devil’s hand might have reached even Silver!” Fenit loudly said in high spirits. “This is clearly Shure’s— No. The ploy of the goblins and the elves working with them who look down on us elves! This is no longer just a war, but a holy war!”

Fenit turned to Pale with a sharp gaze. “My dear cousin, this is a holy war, thus I cannot show favoritism! You shall join Commander Felbi and his squad to bring aid to the Forest of the Lost (Sheng)!”

“I was actually about to ask that myself...” Pale quietly muttered.

Fenit was being threatening, but in the end, he just pushed her to go exactly where she wanted to go.

“Go now!” Fenit commanded.

“Alright...” Pale said.

If war were to break out, the only way she would be able to save Selena is to end the war quickly.

That was the conclusion Pale arrived to, so she chose to go to the battlefield.

“Are you sure?” A guard asked Fenit after Pale left.

Fenit’s face twisted in anger. “Who do you think is responsible for that attack just now? Do you really think it was Shure’s ploy?”

“H-Huh?” The soldier was confused.

“It’s Pale’s supporters! The people who want her to become chief!”

Fenit believed that it was actually Pale behind the attack just now.

“B-But didn’t Master Pale run to help just now?” The soldier reasoned.

“She probably just wanted to see my corpse!”

“T-Then are you saying...”

“Yes! Pale must die in this war!”



Bui frowned upon hearing the leader-class orc, Gui’s, report.

“There is a human village right next to the forest...”

Bui folded his arms as he sat cross-legged.

“I want to think,” Bui said before leaving Gui.

Whenever Bui wanted to ponder something, he would always go to the mother tree, Doralia.

“A frontal attack on the humans would only serve to increase our casualties, but... If the human village were to be completed, we might lose our chance to stop them. Will we have to move again? I don’t think there’s a place better than here, though.”

There was plenty of food here in the south. The strongest influence were the goblins living in the west, but the orcs had a good relationship with them, so they were no problem. If Bui could just deal with the threat in the east, he would be able to ensure his village’s safety.

If ever he did need to escape, the only path he would be able take would be the north, but because they’ve been developing the south so much, they haven’t had any opportunity to scout there.

Right now they had 150 orc warriors and 70 orc females. There weren’t many places that could accommodate a village their size.

The humans coming back stronger than before meant that there was a country behind them. That’s the only reason they would be able to put so much power into the frontline.

What they were doing wasn’t much different with the goblins.

The goblins moved to the west, and then pushed the orcs toward the east, where the frontline was. In one sense, it could be said that the goblins were keeping the orcs from running away.

That leaves little room for the orcs to maneuver.

What should Bui do to ensure the orcs' safety?

What's the matter, Bui?

"Ah, Doralia." Bui decided to talk about their current predicament to Doralia.

When Doralia finished hearing him out, she spoke.

I see... So you want to protect this village.

"Y-Yes... That's right." As Bui leaned onto Doralia, he looked up at the branches that blocked the sun's rays.

"If the enemy forces are strong, then..."

They should just weaken them.

"Hmm... Right, right... I see.. No, but..."

Doralia quietly watched over Bui as he pondered to himself.

The next day, Bui took two orcs with him and created a new village to the east.

It was a small village, but that was enough to create a breakwater between the orc village and the humans; a village to protect the flourishing orc village, so to speak.

How Bui's plans would fare was yet unknown, but the orcs' influence was gradually getting stronger.

—314 days until the battle with the humans.



Level has risen.
53 => 54

INTERMISSION

GI ZU'S DUEL RECORD I

Status	
Name	Gi Zu Ruo
Race	Goblin
Level	1
Class	Noble
Possessed Skills	Overpowering Howl; Throw Projectile; Spear Mastery B-; Instant Kill; Mad Shishi; Bite
Divine Protection	Mad God (Zu Oru)
Attributes	None

Brushing off the approaching blade, Gi Zu thrust the butt of his spear into the side of the enemy goblin rare. As the enemy goblin rare flew through the air, he followed after him, then as he tried to pick himself up, hit his legs. No longer able to stand the pain, the goblin rare fell to the ground. Gi Zu grabbed his head with one hand.

“Surrender, or else...” Gi Zu threatened to crush the enemy goblin’s head with his hand.

The goblin rare cried as Gi Zu gripped tighter and tighter, until eventually, he was at the brink of losing consciousness.

“I give, I give! Spare me!” The goblin rare cried.

“Good,” Gi Zu said.

Upon release, the goblin rare prostrated himself before Gi Zu, who looked down at him for a moment before turning to eye the surrounding normal goblins.

He spoke in a commanding tone. “From this day onwards, this village belongs to I, Gi Zu Ruo! If you resist, you will die!”

After being sent away by the king to expand the horde, Gi Zu Ruo renewed his loyalty

to the king.

“I need to be more like Lord Gi Ga,” he muttered.

During the battle with the Orc King, Gi Ga Rax lost an arm and a leg to ensure the king’s victory. Though at the time Gi Zu did not understand it, the king rewarded Gi Ga with a rider-beast, and then the humans whom Gi Ga had befriended gave him a new leg. To Gi Zu, Gi Ga was a person worthy of admiration.

Gi Zu had been wielding a spear for as far as he could recall. Not long after he was born in the same village as Gi Ga, he was taken into Gi Ga’s spear squad, and then they fought against the orc king. It was then that he received the blessing of the mad god and recklessly cut down enemy after enemy.

By the time he realized it, he had evolved from a mere goblin into something with relatively more wisdom.

Gi Zu was grateful for his good fortune that allowed him to survive despite recklessly running around wildly by himself.

As he walked along the area, he thought to himself, *This fortune must also be because of the king and Lord Gi Ga.*

If so, then he must fulfill his mission and gather more goblins for the king.

Goblins didn’t grow on trees, however; therefore, he had no choice but to look for the small goblin villages scattered throughout the forest, gathering the small hordes one at a time.

A few days after Gi Zu parted with the king, he came across a small goblin village.

It was a small horde of 30 goblins, but Gi Zu valiantly charged in head-on and challenged their chief. The enemy chief being a goblin rare, naturally could not win against Gi Zu, who was not only a goblin noble but also a battle-scarred veteran. After suppressing them, Gi Zu immediately made them swear fealty to the king, then he asked the goblin rare of the other goblin hordes living nearby.

It was then that he found out there was another goblin noble nearby.

“Oh? is that goblin stronger than me?” Gi Zu asked.

“I don’t know, but... He’s big and his weapon is strong,” the goblin replied.

Gi Zu thought it unfortunate that the goblin rare couldn’t tell him more, but he had his own ideas when it came to these sort of matters.

“I’ll just have to see him for myself then.” Gi Zu fiercely smiled as he decided to have the goblin rare lead him to that goblin noble. “Hmm... But before that...”

Gi Zu was born after the king had occupied Gi Village; therefore, unlike the first generation goblins, he was born at a time when the food was plenty.

Because Gi Zu himself had never experienced starvation, he found the sight of the emaciating goblins ridiculous.

There was a considerable difference between the height of the rare-class goblins raised in Gi Village and the goblins here. The king himself hadn’t intended it, but by fixing the food issue in Gi Village, the goblins at Gi Village were able to grow bigger than other goblins.

“What do you sorry gobs think of filling your belly with some meat?” Gi Zu asked, at which the surrounding goblins all gulped, prompting Gi Zu to raise his spear and laugh. “Hah! Then I guess we’re eating first!”

There were about 30 goblins all-in-all in the village. Gi Zu took three normal goblins with him and entered the forest to look for some prey. A little later, they managed to hunt a beast. In doing so, Gi Zu did not only secure food for the village, but he also managed to teach the three normal goblins how to work together.

At first, the goblins didn’t understand too well, but after the second and third hunt, they finally grasped it. Unfortunately, they couldn’t stay any longer, as the other goblins were waiting at the village with empty bellies.

Their hunt for the day were a double head, a spear deer, and a big-horned deer. Just that three by themselves were enough to make the goblins of the village wide-eyed. They had never seen a feast of this scale before!

“Now feast!” Gi Zu said.

At first, the goblins couldn't believe their eyes when they saw Gi Zu treat them to this feast, but when they realized he was being serious, they unabashedly dug in to this sumptuous feast.

Until now the goblin rare had always monopolized the village's hunts, but after the feast, even the rare-class goblin had a sense of satisfaction he had never before experienced.

To these goblins, Gi Zu's existence was like that of a savior.

"Why would you give us meat?" One of the goblins asked.

"Why? Because you're hungry! Of course, I would give you meat. Are we not comrades who have sworn to follow the king?" Gi Zu replied.

Putting it positively, Gi Zu was optimistic; negatively, Gi Zu was ignorant of hardship; and to the goblins of this village, that attitude of his was nothing short of shocking. Food was supposedly something a goblin bet his whole existence on just to secure, and yet here was a goblin who generously gave it away. Much in the same way that Gi Ga swore absolute fealty to the king, these simple goblins were greatly touched by his actions.

The normal goblins could not comprehend what Gi Zu was talking about. It was simply far too complicated for them, but at the very least they understood Gi Zu's greatness and the fact that behind him was someone even greater.

The rare-class goblin alone was puzzled.

He couldn't help himself but ask. "King? Are you not the king?"

"The king is the great goblin to whom I have sworn my spear. He should be somewhere north of us. Right now, we are gathering strength for the sake of the coming war with the humans. Once you meet him, I'm sure you will understand his greatness," Gi Zu said.

The rare-class goblin couldn't help but blink his eyes upon realizing that there was a goblin even greater than this one standing before him.

“I will never forget that you gave me meat,” the rare-class goblin said.

Gi Zu happily nodded.



In the end, Gi Zu decided to stay in the village for a few more days. The rare-class goblin earnestly offered the females to Gi Zu, but Gi Zu was someone born under the rule of the king. As far as he was concerned, embracing the females was a reward given only to those worthy, usually because of some merit made.

To Gi Zu, sharing food with his comrades wasn't anything special. That's why despite the goblins sentimentally offering the females to him, he couldn't help but feel that accepting them would still slight the king's law. As a noble who has been given the right to have a household, to break the king's law would be to spit in the face of the king and Lord Gi Ga, whom he holds in esteem. Which is why, in the end, Gi Zu decided to return the females to the village.

“I am glad that you offered them to me, but as someone with a household, I must refuse,” Gi Zu said.

Wry smiles were had as Gi Zu returned the females to the village. Not to mention, the goblins were again moved at his actions.

To happily receive the females was a given to the goblins, so his refusal was truly shocking.

After a few days passed, the goblins had completely taken to revering Gi Zu. During this time, Gi Zu had taught the rest of the goblins how to work together and set traps. By doing so, he would be able to ensure that they wouldn't die even without him.

Of course, Gi Zu had no intentions of dying, but the enemy was another noble class. In the unfortunate scenario where he perishes in battle, the king must be informed of the existence of a formidable goblin in the southwest. Even if he can't win against the goblin, the king and Lord Gi Ga might be able to.

Because of that he asked the goblins of the village to send a message to the king. This is the reason why he taught them how to feed themselves and ensured that they wouldn't die.

After a few more days passed, when the rare-class goblin, who was the former boss of the village, had fully learned how to set traps, Gi Zu decided to go back to his original objective.

“I wish to challenge the strongest goblin in the area,” Gi Zu said.

Of course, the goblins earnestly tried to stop him. He was their benefactor. If they were to lose him now, the village’s bright future would surely be dampened.

It was a complicated matter too hard for the normal goblins to understand, but when they realized that the boss who gave them food might die, they were greatly disheartened. They held onto his sleeves, begging him not to fight the noble-class goblin.

Unfortunately, Gi Zu had made his resolve.

In the end, the rare-class goblin led Gi Zu to the cave where the noble class goblin lived.



The rare goblin turned back to Gi Zu, as if asking if he were sure about this, but he just hurried him up, and eventually, they arrived at the area right next to the cave. By then it was nighttime.

As Gi Zu ordered the normal goblin they caught along the way to inform the noble goblin of his challenge, the rare-class goblin’s anxiety worsened.

Gi Zu told the rare-class to go before he went to the cave. When he got to the cave, the noble-class goblin and his horde had already gathered there.

“So you’re the bastard who wants to challenge me,” a noble-class goblin even bigger than Gi Zu said. There was an old scar extending from his shoulder to chest.

“I am Gi Zu Ruo. I have come here at the command of the king. I challenge you, ruler of these lands!” Gi Zu boldly proclaimed.

For a moment, the enemy noble was wide-eyed, but a little later, he laughed loudly.

“HA HA HA! FOOL! This isn’t the sort of forest a soft fool like yourself can live in! Kill him!” The enemy noble said.

Normal and rare goblins smiled as they unsheathed their weapons and surrounded Gi Zu.

Gi Zu’s gaze grew cold as he eyed the surrounding enemies and readied his spear.

“So you can’t even accept a challenge. It seems the only thing big about you is your body,” Gi Zu said.

“I’d like to see just how much longer you’ll be able to keep up that stupid act. Kill him!” The enemy noble commanded.

The surrounding enemy goblins all attacked at the same time.

A club came swinging from behind, but Gi Zu deflected it with the butt of his spear in a speed twice as fast as the club. A sharpened picket came thrusting from the left, but Gi Zu inclined his upper half, letting it slip through. At the same time, Gi Zu used the momentum of his spear to strike at the goblin whose club he’d deflected, then he swept at the goblins coming at him from the right and from in front. The only remaining goblin was the one with a picket, but when the spear returned from its course, it took its head with it.

Gi Zu exhaled.

“Mercy will not be shown to those who fight. I am Gi Zu Ruo, representative of the great king and first disciple of the indomitable Gi Ga Rax!” Gi Zu declared.

“Don’t cower! No matter how strong he is, he’s just one guy! Kill him with numbers!” The enemy noble-class goblin declared, prompting the surrounding goblins to tighten their encirclement on Gi Zu.

Breathing out faintly once, Gi Zu took a step forward then struck his spear into the corpse of the goblin he’d killed moments ago. With great power, he lifted up the corpse.

“GURUoOOO!”

Then he threw the corpse up front toward one part of the encirclement.

The surrounding goblins didn't think he would try to pull off a stunt like that with his spear; they couldn't help but cry out in surprise. Even the rare goblins in the path of the thrown corpse were so shocked that they forgot to move away. Because of that they ended up getting hit by the corpse.

In the midst of all the surprise and confusion, Gi Zu stepped forward. He skewered the rare goblins buried under the corpse, then as he pulled his spear out, he swung his spear and swept around him.

Finally, the goblins awoke from their stupor. Immediately, they tried to attack Gi Zu, but their uncoordinated attacks were easily dodged, then Gi Zu struck them dead. Gradually, Gi Zu neared the enemy noble-class goblin.

A spear lunged at Gi Zu from both flanks, but he twisted his body and dodged, allowing him to leap through the opened path.

A goblin immediately came running for him from behind, however; but Gi Zu quickly dealt with him by burying the butt of his spear into the solar plexus of the goblin. Unfortunately for the goblin, it ended up hitting the center of his chest instead, giving rise to one last throe before he breathed his last and collapsed.

Gi Zu didn't even turn around to confirm he was dead. The sounds were enough.

Gi Zu ran for the enemy noble goblin.

Meanwhile, the enemy goblin was gradually realizing how strong Gi Zu was, causing panic to well up within him. Gi Zu's spear handling, his ability to quickly see the hole in the encirclement, and his courage which allowed him to stand fearless in the face of a horde. All these things proved to the noble-class goblin that Gi Zu was far stronger than him.

The individual's strength wasn't the only deciding factor in becoming leader of a horde, however.

"Gi?" A goblin cried out.

The enemy noble-class goblin had grabbed the head of a normal goblin, causing the

goblin to cry out. But without caring one bit for it, he threw the normal goblin at Gi Zu.

“Nu!?”

Gi Zu was taken by surprise with the appearance of a giant object suddenly flying toward him. After dealing with two goblins who came at him from his flanks, he swung his spear to deflect the object flying toward him. He didn't know what it was, but when he recognized the detestable sound of a spear, he quickly twisted his body. Gi Zu managed to avoid the trajectory of the flying goblin.

An anguished cry rose when the goblin hit the ground, but the enemy noble-class goblin was faintly smiling.

Gi Zu glared at him. “What do you think your comrades are!?”

The enemy laughed loudly at Gi Zu's angry outburst. “These guys live for my sake. They should be happy to be of use.”

The sound of teeth being ground resounded from Gi Zu's mouth.

That's impossible, he thought. Whether it was the Gi Village, the Fortress of the Abyss, or the tribes... everyone helped each other to live. When the humans attacked, everyone stood together to face them. It didn't matter whether one was a normal class or a noble class.

Everyone was equal under the king.

Even a normal or a rare could be recognized as long as he showed results. Anyone could be rewarded with a female or given good food to eat. Even our fealty to the king was something we swore on our own volition. We were never forced!

“Are you really ok with this!?” Gi Zu glared at the goblins around him as he spun his spear.

The normal goblins backed off at the pressure emanating from Gi Zu, but the rare goblins wore a cold smile on their faces.

“Looks like everyone agrees with me. Now I think I'm about fed up with that stupid look on your face! Finish him!”

At the noble goblin's behest, the normal and rare goblins charged. The rare goblins swung their spears from the back while the normal goblins acted as living shields at the front.

30 days after Gi Zu accepted this mission from the king, he found himself in a predicament.



Gi Zu's level has risen.

1 => 15

CHAPTER 128

SYLPH UNIFICATION WAR III

TI Note: Correction, blue steel to blue-silver steel.

“Thank you... Truly,” Silver said to Felbi.

Felbi led a preemptive squad into the Forest of the Lost (Sheng), under the assumption that the village would be suffering an internal conflict, an assumption proved true the moment they invaded the village.

By utilizing Pale’s plans, Felbi was able to expel the Shure Faction, and in the blink of an eye, brought control of the village back to Silver.

“Messenger!”

As Silver and his people were expressing their thanks to Felbi, a messenger came running to them in ragged breaths.

The Silent Forest (Sinfall) had fallen.

“That fast? No, with the villages in chaos, I suppose it could be possible,” Felbi muttered.

Nodding, Pale touched her slender chin and asked. “Lord Silva... If I recall correctly, doesn’t Sheng have a huge supply of Blue-Silver Steel (Srilana)?”

Silver nodded though he wasn’t sure what she had in mind.

Pale turned to Felbi. “It’s probable that they’re able to go so fast because of the lack of heavy armor. It might be best to ignore their speed and focus on our preparations. That way we can take them by surprise once they get here.”

“What about Lord Nash Jirad? Won’t he make it in time?” Felbi asked full anxiety.

But Pale's words were as cold as ice, calmly continuing despite her friend's apparent anxiety. "Lord Silver, please prepare some Srilana armor and Orichalcum weapons for Symphoria."

"The chaos in the village has been suppressed to some extent... I'll prepare as much as I can." Silver nodded.

Pale smiled at that, then she walked away with Felbi.

Their battle had just begun.

As far as Pale was concerned, the sooner this needless war ended the better.

Though it did beg the question. Why would the wise and heroic Shure choose to ally himself with the goblins? The goblins were unintelligent brutes that destroyed crops and kidnapped the women of other races. The elves wouldn't lose to them even if they were to come in great numbers.

Besides, the elf villages had a barrier that led others astray. It should be very difficult for the goblins to get through.

There should be a deeper reason behind this whole plot.

Perhaps Shure Forni intends to use this as an opportunity to lead the sylphs himself. Or perhaps his renown of being heroic and wise was nothing more than a sham, and in fact, he was nothing more than an ambitious chief.

Such lowly characters were common among the humans. Could Shure be one of them? Regardless, however, it was undeniable that he has indeed joined hands with the goblins and has instigated his sympathizers to cause havoc in the villages. In fact, no one even knew of his sympathizers in Symphoria until the moment he made his move.

Pale couldn't understand.

Did Shure Forni have a reason to betray the elves? Impossible. If that were the case, the entire Tranquil Forest (Forni) wouldn't have chosen to follow him, and he wouldn't have sympathizers in every village.

If his renown for his wisdom is indeed not a lie, then could it be that there is something

he wishes to accomplish even if it means using the goblins?

Could it be related to the demihumans? Some of them live in the west and south, but most of them live in the east. But no... That's not possible either. If the elves were under the demihumans, perhaps, but the elves were masters over the demihumans.

Could it be an enemy? Was he driven to a corner?

But what could...

The humans are still a long way away to the east.

Perhaps the goblins are actually strong.

"There's not enough information."

Pale and Felbi sighed as they walked.

They had 200 elven warriors under them. At most, they just wanted to avoid letting them die a meaningless death.

But when the worst possible outcome was considered, Pale decided they had to make their move.

"Felbi, I have a proposal," Pale said as she looked up Felbi.

Felbi nodded upon hearing her plan.



Meanwhile, while Pale and Felbi were fighting to free the Forest of the Lost (Sheng), Shure led the goblin-elf army to their next objective.

After occupying the Silent Forest (Sinfall), Shure and the Goblin King decided to split their army into two. One would head to Sheng, while the other would head to the Whispering Forest (Jirad).

At this point, all Shure knew was that his sympathizers were causing havoc in two villages. After all, he needed to spend some of his men to look for Priena and it was

also important for his people to lay low when communicating with the Tranquil Forest (Forni). Not to mention, it was indeed exceedingly difficult to quell the unrest in the recently occupied Sinfall while moving his people at the same time; hence, it was by no means incompetence that left Shure in the dark of Pale and Felbi's accomplishments.

The goblins could not possibly quell the unrest among the elves, so naturally, such business fell to Shure's hands. Unfortunately, juggling politics and military was truly difficult.

"Our goals are to take back Sheng and Jirad. Once we've accomplished this, we'll be able to pressure Symphoria," Shure said to the Goblin King as they both looked at the map

The Goblin King touched his thick chin. "Fighting two fronts is quite daring."

Shure nodded. "We don't have time. My sympathizers in the other villages are getting fewer. We have to move quickly."

It would be a lie to say that Shure himself was not in a hurry. After all, he wanted to reward the sympathizers who have sacrificed much for his cause.

"...Very well. It is indeed best to attack while the enemy villages are in chaos."

The reason the Goblin King agreed was also in due part to his own calculations. He wanted to deliver a powerful blow to the elves before giving them a chance to pick themselves back up.

The elves thought similarly of the other races, but the goblins in particular were considered to be the lowest of them all.

Be it the demihumans, the elves, the monsters, or the humans, in the whole wide world, the goblins alone were considered as the weakest and most savage race that could never be trusted.

It was not completely unfounded, however, as even the Goblin King himself couldn't deny that. But there was a danger to the goblin's ill-reputation, especially for the Goblin King who wished to build his own country.

The weak would be weeded out.

Ever since the Goblin King was born, the law of the jungle had been stuffed into his face, a law that proved even truer for organizations.

A benevolent country that would lend a hand to a country unworthy of an alliance did not exist; hence, the Goblin King wanted to first show the elves that the goblins weren't something to be disdained.

"You should take Jirad. I'll leave Fei with you to lead the way. Meanwhile, I'll be heading down south to the Silent Forest (Sheng)."

After the Goblin King and Shure decided on the forces they would bring, they concluded the meeting.

"By the way, the item you requested from the koro dwarf seems to have been completed. Shunaria said she'd bring it here. The smith, Dumbre Dadee David, was apparently quite delighted with the result. He mentioned it's been a while since he last stuck his hand in a bloody transaction."

The frowning Goblin King was relieved upon hearing that.

He innocently exclaimed. "Oh! It's done?"

Shure smiled at that. "It'll get here by the time you finish with Jirad. Look forward to it."

"A weapon you can be accustomed to is a precious treasure in battle. I'm glad it's done."

Shure decided to offer a toast to the Goblin King.

Pouring pure-water wine on their cups, he said. "Once we've accomplished our objectives, let's meet up at Sheng. I pray that the fortunes of war grace you."

"Hmm... I don't like praying to gods, but... Fortune to you, Shure Forni."

After toasting their blue-silver-steel glasses, the two went their own ways.



The entrance to the Whispering Forest (Jirad), which was ruled by Nash Jirad, was firmly shut.

Normally, we goblins wouldn't be able to force our way through, but the elves' barrier had been disabled.

This must be the work of Shure's sympathizers.

The entrance was as quiet as death, almost as if a war had just taken place.

The silence was deafening. Was the forest trying to strangle us with silence?

"Now then, what to do?"

I had over 100 soldiers with me. Most of them were goblins, but there were also 30 archers who've sworn themselves to Shure. Shure's adjutant, Fei, was responsible for leading them.

Among the goblins, the shaman, Gi Za Zakuend, and the Ferocious Arm, Gi Ba, were leading. The tribal goblins Ru Rou of Ganra, Dashka of Gaidga, and Hal Paradua were with Shure. I left the three of them to the wide-eyed Gi Jii. This can be considered a trial for the wide-eyed goblin. Hopefully, he'll be able to meet my expectations.

The human, Shumea, and the elf, Selena, were with me. Shumea didn't have a good relationship with the elves and the goblins, so she preferred to stay by my side. The fact that she merely doesn't have a good relationship with them, however, is a testament to her high adaptability and sociability as a person.

Selena was clinging to Shumea as usual; she readied her bow while hiding behind her.

"Shall we attack at once? It seems they have yet to recover from the sabotage of our sympathizers," Fei suggested, at which I nodded while looking around me.

Suspicious.

It's quiet, yes, but it reeks.

I looked up the sky through the gap between the trees. The vast blue sky was alone with its clouds. Not a bird was flying through it.

“Fei, do the sylphs have a spell to conceal one’s self?” I asked.

Gi Za’s ears perked up the moment he heard the word ‘magic’.

“There is, I suppose...” Fei said, then he glanced around him and ordered one of his subordinates.

He seems to have picked up on what I was implying. As expected of Shure’s assistant.

“Boss, something doesn’t feel right... I don’t know how to put it, but something isn’t right.” Shumea put on her helmet as she covered Selena.

I agree, but if we don’t go, nothing will happen.

“Gi Ba take three goblins with you and accompany the scout elves. Gi Za, watch the left flank. I’ll watch the right, while Fei watches the back.”

From overhead our formation looked like a long spindle.

We proceeded warily. As we entered into the Whispering Forest, the scenery changed.

“Your Highness, up ahead!” Gi Ba yelled, prompting me to look toward the front.

Through the gaps of the thick trees could be seen the figures of demihumans that could almost be mistaken for ghosts. They were members of the Fang Tribe, werewolves. On their bodies were countless scars, and on their face was a grim expression. From that and the sword in their hands, I could tell, they were our enemies.

“A demihuman?” Fei muttered in surprise.

“Prepare for battle! Don’t let your guard down!” I ordered.

“Lord Fei, from the back!” An elf said loudly, almost screaming.

Behind me and Fei were minotaurs. Their bodies were also covered with scars, while

their expressions were so grim they seemed hollow. Regardless, however, they masterfully handled the great axe they wielded. They could not be taken lightly.

“OOOoo000!” The enemies bellowed out a roar, almost howling, and then the werewolves and minotaurs attacked. There were about 50 werewolves coming from the front, while 40 minotaurs kept us from retreating.

What are they thinking?

“Spears, forward! Stop their charge!” I commanded.

As the spears moved forward into the frontlines, I unsheathed my sword and turned around to meet the minotaurs.

“Fei, tighten your watch. Use all the elves if you must!”

Up ahead, Gi Ba and his three goblin subordinates fought equally with the demihumans.

“Gi Za support the front. I’ll leave it to you if they manage to break through,” I said.

“Got it. You can leave it to me!” He said.

Gi Za happily ordered his druids to begin chanting. “Focus fire on the werewolves trying to surround Gi Do from the right!”

Under Gi Za, the druids fought as one and supported the goblins at the front, allowing them to create new opportunities to turn the battle around.

“Onwards!” The ferocious Gi Ba commanded, prompting his three goblins to swing their swords one after another.

One goblin would block a werewolf’s attack, while the other two goblins would swing their swords; at the same time, in another part, the spears would line up and skewer the werewolves.

Gradually, the battle at the front swung to our favor, but the enemy wouldn’t let us have our way so easily, and from the heavens suddenly fell a rain of arrows.

“Close in on the enemy!”

If we near the demihumans, the enemy will have no choice but to stop their attack.

“Gi!?”

But contrary to expectations, the enemy shot goblins and demihumans altogether.

That’s not good.

We’ll be at a disadvantage if the druids can’t offer their support.

“Boss, this is really bad!” Shumea dodged the great axe of a minotaur, then thrust her spear toward its legs. The minotaur cried out in pain, but it kept on charging, forcing Shumea to tumble on the ground to dodge.

“Wind of ^{Wind Shield} Heaven’s Blessing!” Several elves chanted from behind.

At that, a wind blew up from the elves at the center of the horde, covering the sky.

A cyclone could be seen raging up above in the sky, deflecting the descending arrows.

“Goblin King, your decision is correct. Let’s attack,” Fei said.

From the trees to the sides could be seen hostile elves. The demihumans changed their formation to protect them.

“...That magic just now. How many times can you use it?” I asked Fei while battling the minotaurs.

“It depends on the enemy’s attack, but... 5 times,” Fei said.

A short while later the raging tempest up above dispersed, leaving nothing behind as it vanished into nothingness. The scope and power is big, but it only lasts for an instant. Moreover, it requires several practitioners to be cast, and if we don’t use it wisely, we’ll only end up crippling ourselves.

“We’ll just have to break through these guys before they can attack again then!”

Jumping over the sounds of metal clanging, I cut down a minotaur with my sword.

As I pulled out my sword, I repelled the great axe that came at me from my flanks.

“GURUUuoOOOA!” I roared as I slammed my fist into a minotaur, sending it flying away, while I ran onwards.

Minotaurs blocked my way, but I repelled their attacks with my longsword and counterattacked with my own.

“Your Highness, from above!” Someone cried from behind.

“Let my body ^{Shield} be inviolable.!”

Immediately, I invoked Shield, but the raining arrows pierced through the black flames and entered my flesh.

“My heart rides ^{Windea} with the wind.!”

The air shook, and in the next instant, eight small cyclones sprouted around me, blowing the minotaurs away and deflecting the descending arrows.

“Be careful, Your Highness!” Gi Za shouted.

I haven’t let my guard down, actually, but thanks for the support. It seems Gi Za and his druid have fully suppressed the front.

With Gi Za’s support I broke through the minotaurs and approached the enemy elves.

“Lowly monster!” The elf with the best armor stepped out.

Is this the leader?

My sword clad in black flames clashed with the enemy’s. Each time our blades met, the black flames seemed to be repelled.

Is that also an effect of Orichalcum or Srilana?

I still had the upper hand despite that because of my strength, but if I didn't settle the battle soon, I would eventually have no weapon left. The enemy just kept blocking my attacks, gradually wearing my sword down.

Still, the enemy was no slouch, and while I continued to attack, he managed to keep on blocking while keeping himself from incurring any fatal wounds.

He is the enemy commander. Of course, he'd have some skills. Normally, they would be seized with fear and attack impatiently in their panic.

Be that as it may...

We can't keep doing this forever!

I can't leave, though. The elves specialize in long-ranged fighting. I have to keep our fight close.

"Nu." Brushing away the enemy's sword, I leapt right into the enemy's chest. At point-blank, even if the enemy managed to hit me with his sword, it wouldn't be a fatal hit.

As I seized the enemy with my hand, he tried to swing his weapon.

Unfortunately for him, his sword's course would end up too far. He wouldn't be able to cut me apart.

"GU!?"

But contrary my expectations, the enemy's sword buried into me with a weight greater than I could have possibly imagined, causing my knees to quiver at the great pain. For a moment, I stopped.

"GURUuuu000aAo0A!" Roaring, I pushed myself forward.

A clever man would back off here, but the enemy elf seemed seized by fear, as he sought to swing his sword again.

Ignoring the pain, I filled my legs with strength.

Then as I closed in our distance, I seized his arms that were about to descend and

crushed it.

The elf's anguished cries fell on deaf ears as I took his weapon and turned to the other elves.

Now our weapons are equal.

With my sword pointed at them, the elves stepped back bit by bit.

"Get lost!"

I considered pursuing them, but when I saw the situation around, I changed my mind.

We were still dominating the army, but many of the goblins have been wounded.

The elves' defensive magic wasn't all-powerful; it couldn't completely render the enemy's long-range attack moot.

Considering the battles ahead, I couldn't carelessly lose any of the goblins, as it was hard to get reinforcements.

I wish I had some veteran warriors with me.

I watched unmoving as the enemy ran away, then I turned around to finish off the enemy that were left behind.

—310 days until the battle with the humans.



Level has risen.

54 => 55

CHAPTER 129

SYLPH UNIFICATION WAR IV

In the Whispering Forest the demihumans were no different from slaves. For the past 50 years, they lived their lives like livestock, rearing their children for the elves and undertaking hard labor for them.

With the Forest of Darkness ruled by the elves at the center, the various regions could be divided into 6. They are Forni, Jirad, Gastair, Sinfall, Symphoria, and Sheng. This division hasn't changed since the time the demihumans were driven into the forest.

The sage's council at the time decided to accept the demihumans and evenly distributed responsibility among the various elven villages..

In other words, the demihumans were divided among the various villages.

It left a bitter taste in my mouth when I heard the captured demihumans' story.

The harpies were the ones who caught wind of our movement, while the werewolves and the minotaurs were made to fight in the frontlines.

"To think they would actually use our neighbors as slaves!" Fei spat in rage before I could even say anything.

The young yet skilled elf was enraged by what he was seeing, though his strong spirit kept that anger in check.

"They are a disgrace to the elves!" The other elves from Forni each worded out their disdain for Jirad's elves.

That's a good thing. At the very least, the elves from Forni are able to feel repugnance at seeing the demihumans enslaved, but what about the goblins?

Right now we are fighting together.

If we could maintain this relationship, they might eventually start treating us as their

good neighbors. Of course, it'll take time, but regardless, as long as enough time is given, we will eventually be able to change the perception of the elves toward the goblins.

"Now then, what to do? We can't exactly take these prisoners with us," I asked.

Fei and the other elves glared at the Whispering Forest (Jirad). "Let's bind them for now. They're powerless as long as there's no one to lead them."

The captured demihumans don't seem to show any intentions of resisting. They seem as if they've completely resigned themselves to their fate.

"Sure dampens your mood seeing them, eh," Shumea said as she took off her helmet, which covered her whole face.

I wryly smiled. "Being a former slave yourself, do they have anything left?"

"Well... I was a battle slave, so I wasn't treated as poorly as them, but regardless, it's hard to live when you don't want to."

Shumea herself seems to have lived a hard life.

"One day I'd like to hear your story... over wine, of course."

"Heh~ If its liquor from you, Boss, I'll drink as much as you want."

Did I just stir up the hornet's nest?

Well, whatever. I should be able to get some elven wine after this battle. It probably won't be enough to give to the whole horde to drink, but it should be enough for a feast.

"The goblins are ready, Your Highness," Gi Za Zakuend said. He was responsible for burying the dead and reorganizing the goblins into new three-man-cell groups.

"Those who can still fight shall follow me to subjugate the Whispering Forest (Jirad)!" I declared, and the goblins cheered.

"Strike down the hammer of justice on the heathens who shamed our neighbors!" Fei

declared, and the elves cheered.

With morale among the goblin-elf army at its peak, the Whispering Forest (Jirad) was quickly subjugated.

But immediately after, an unexpected report came.

Fei and I stiffened upon receiving it.

“Impossible.”

It was a mystery who it was that said that word, but it clearly resounded throughout the residence of Jirad Nash, the chief of the Whispering Forest (Jirad).

Shure Forni had been defeated.

“What shall we do, Your Highness?” Gi Za asked with a sharp gaze.

I felt shame at my stupefaction when I heard his voice, but I knew it wouldn’t do to dally. We had no time. We had to decide our next move quickly.

“Is Shure safe? What of his army?”

But we didn’t have any details. What about Gi Jii’s horde? The other tribal goblins?

“We’ll dispatch the army. Fei, pick someone to handle this village!”

“Ah! Y-Yes!” Fei responded though still flustered.

I turned to the goblins. “We’re sending out reinforcements. Gi Za and Gi Ba take 50 goblins with you and look for the others. As for the rest of you, you will be staying with me in this village.”

When I asked Gi Za with my eyes whether he could do it, he met my gaze with a nod full of confidence.

“Your Highness, I have just one question: How much time will you give me?” Gi Za asked.

We're sending half of our army, so we won't be able to continue our invasion of the elves in the meantime.

But the time we have actually depends on Shure's life.

"Four days. If you can't find them within that time, come back."

"As you will."

The goblin reinforcements left the Whispering Forest (Jirad).



"Can we really win?" Felbi asked, dubious.

"Of course, so make sure you act strong," Pale encouraged.

"R-Right..."

When they got word that Shure Forni's army was approaching, the Sheng-Symphoria army led by Felbi fell into panic.

The enemy was coming off the momentum of subjugating the Silent Forest (Sinfall); not to mention, they even had the ferocious goblins with them. It would be stranger if they were actually able to keep calm.

The only one who was calm in the camp was the battle-hardened Pale.

"Silence!"

She silenced the panicking elves in the meeting before the war, and then proposed a formation for the heavy infantry. The abundant equipment made of Srilana that the Forest of the Lost (Sheng) had stored were used to create a new squad of swordsmen.

"We can't win against Forni with their high morale in a battle with bows. All the more so when they have goblins with them. But that doesn't mean that they have no weakness."

It was only a given that these elves, who knew nothing of war, would take the advice

of Pale, who in her time as a member of Elks came to be renowned as the Silent Moon.

The Forni-Goblin Army's weakness was their alliance itself. There was no way their relationship would actually be perfectly equal. It would be a different story if there were a powerful leader leading them, but without a clear understanding of who was to lead, the more powerful the enemy they faced, the more disadvantaged they would be.

"We'll focus our attack on the goblins. Once their formation breaks, we'll send in the swordsmen and break the Forni-Goblin Army."

When the elves heard her calm words, they looked at each other.

They were doubtful whether things would truly go so smoothly. Their gazes eventually fell on Felbi, who was the actual leader of their army.

"Let's do it! We don't have any other plans. If we lose this battle, there won't be anyone left to stop Forni. We are warriors! Let us defend our home!"

Felbi's words spurred the elven warriors, and the Sheng-Forni Army began preparations to carry out Pale's plans.

Shure did not know yet that Symphoria's army had already arrived at Sheng. When they got to the entrance of the Forest of the Lost (Sheng), they found it odd that the gate was open, but thinking that their sympathizers were still in good health, they entered.

Shure was indeed careless. The fatigue from the ceaseless battles the past few days, coupled with the mental fatigue incurred from worrying over his sympathizers, then to top it all off, the tugging desire and hope within him to save his sympathizers all added up together to cloud his vision.

The moment they entered into the Forest of the Lost (Sheng), a giant tree sprouted up and blocked their way.

"Not good! It's a trap! Retreat!" Shure commanded.

Shure's quick response was praiseworthy. If they had stopped there, their casualties would only pile up until they were destroyed, so the best response was indeed to

retreat and reorganize themselves. Unfortunately, Pale had taken the promptness of his response into consideration.

“What!? But The enemy is right in front of us!”

The ferocious Dashka of Gaidga’s horde was the first of the goblins to be attacked.

By charging into the goblins with her soldiers and attacking them from long range, Pale managed to quickly separate the goblins from the elves.

Forni was retreating, but unfortunately, the commands he had given weren’t perfect, worsened by the fact that the goblins without their king was difficult to lead. Shure and his elves retreated, while the goblins found it hard to let the enemy in front of them run. Because of this the Forni-Goblin Army suffered much casualties.

The battle began and ended exactly as Pale had orchestrated.

Pale pursued the fleeing Shure Forni, but stopped after two days.

When she came back to the village, the elven warriors showered her with praise.

This was a precious victory picked up after a series of defeat.

To the elves, Pale’s existence was no different from that of a Goddess of Victory.

“Blessing of the forest and the wind to Pale Symphoria!”

The Forest of the Lost (Sheng) celebrated their victory.



“Lord Shure Forni has returned!”

It was like a huge rock had been lifted from my back when the messenger announced those words.

Shure, who had departed to lead the elves into the Forest of the Lost (Sheng), and Gi Za Zakuend, who led the goblin reinforcements in search of them arrived at the Whispering Forest (Jirad).

“At least you returned safely,” I said.

“Forgive me. I needlessly lost the soldiers you lent me,” Shure said.

It seems it won't be necessary to cheer him up. The elves lost 40 men, while the goblins lost 20. Apparently, it was because of Shure that the goblins lost so little. The goblins hesitated to retreat, but he refused to take no for an answer, and eventually managed to persuade them.

There were countless wounds on Shure's slender body because he personally defended the rear. They had been treated only with some emergency measures, as some of them could be seen to be still bleeding. The bandages wrapped on his head and his arm were all oozing with red.

Gi Za and his horde fought back the pursuing elves, but it was not enough to wash away this defeat.

We have to acknowledge the fact that we have indeed lost.

Now, what to do?

“You are still alive and we have lost only one battle. It's a bit too early to be giving up,” I said to Shure.

“Of course. We can't give up now after getting this far,” Shure agreed.

That being said, though, it is a bit troubling now that the Forest of Lost (Sheng) has managed to recover itself from its chaos.

“Was there such a skilled commander at Sheng?” I inquired.

“No, though I only saw the enemy for an instant, that was definitely a Symphorian soldier,” Shure said.

In other words, the two forests of the south have managed to recover. Moreover, Symphoria was even able to send some soldiers to Sheng. Exactly how are we to break the alliance between these two villages?

I don't want to take too much time, but...

"Symphoria's soldiers are excellent then, I take it," I said.

"The commanding officers are certainly skilled individually, but..." Shure replied.

It seems he can't think of any commander who could pull off that trick in their last battle.

"About that..." Gi Za said as he entered into the room with a male elf in chains.

"We might be able to find something out from this prisoner," Gi Za said as he kicked the elf, causing him to twist in pain. Gi Za looked just like a cruel official.

I turned to Shure for confirmation, and he reluctantly nodded. I'd originally hoped things wouldn't reach this point, which is why I agreed to the two-pronged attack.

"Who is your commander? If you answer you won't suffer," I said.

"You think I would give in to a goblin!?" The elf spat.

Stubbornness usually came with pain. That was even truer for prisoners.

"Just don't kill him," I said before turning heel.

"Of curse," Gi Za said before happily withdrawing with the slave in tow.

"Shure, rest for a bit. Recovering your strength is also your duty," I said.

"...My apologies, Goblin King," he said.

After asking him to rest, I called his adjutant, Fei.

"Let us keep an eye out for the enemy. Can I ask you to organize the goblins and the elves' formation?" I asked.

"Of course," Fei replied.

In the blink of an eye, Fei came up with a formation for the goblins and the elves. When

it comes to these things, they truly are far and beyond the goblins.

Now, what to do about the next battles?

We couldn't occupy Sheng, but we did manage to successfully occupy Jirad. With this over half of the elves have fallen into our grasp.

But that also meant that we had a lot more points to protect.

Sheng was close to both Jirad and Sinfall. It wouldn't be a problem if they attack Jirad, but if they attack Sinfall now, it would be problematic.

"We have to attack, don't we?"

The only way to keep the enemy from attacking is for us to attack ourselves.

We'll have to attack as soon as Shure recovers.

We have no other choice.



In an hour when the black of the night was yet deep, a squad quietly moving deep into the forest.

They had been discreetly taking care not to make any sound, even using magic constantly around them to avoid rousing anyone's alert. To hunters like them, this was par for the course, but they had even sent out scouts nearby to ensure that nothing would go wrong.

At the center of that moving group was Pale Symphoria.

"I can see them," an elf said from above, prompting Pale to look ahead.

Before them was a small squad of elves carrying goods. They were most likely Forni's transport squad.

"We'll burn the goods and capture as many of them as possible. Let's begin."

Paying careful heed even to the sound of the bow drawing, the elves under Pale carried out their attack.

The next day, the Goblin King and Shure received word of this attack.

The supply line between Forni and Jirad had been destroyed, and Shure's Daughter, Shunaria, who was with them, had gone missing.

—307 days until the war with the humans.



Gi Za's level has risen.

45 => 51

CHAPTER 130

SYLPH UNIFICATION WAR V

Status	
Race	Goblin
Level	55
Class	King; Ruler
Possessed Skills	Ruler of the Demon Children of Chaos; Defiant Soul; World Devouring Howl; Sword Mastery A-; Dominator; King's Soul; Ruler's Wisdom III; Household of the Gods; One-Eyed Snake's Evil Eye; The King's Dance at the Edge of Death; Magic Manipulation; Soul of the Berserk King; Third Impact (The Third Chant); Warrior's Instinct; Blessing of the Underworld Goddess; Guided One
Divine Protection	Goddess of the Underworld (Altesia)
Attributes	Darkness; Death
Subordinate Beasts	High Kobold Hasu (Lv77); Gastra (Lv20); Cynthia (Lv1); Orc King (Bui) (Lv82)
Abnormal Status	Blessing of the One-Eyed Snake; Protection of the Twin-Headed Snake

When we got word that the supply line was destroyed and that Shunaria had gone missing, we immediately dispatched the army. Shure, though pale-faced, led the elves and about 50 goblins to look for surviving people from the supply line, while I led the remaining 300 soldiers to march to Sheng.

If we didn't set out immediately we could risk another supply line. That wouldn't do.

"Fei, I'll leave the elves to you. Keep watch and attack from a distance."

"Alright."

The surviving Gaidga goblins and Gi goblins formed the vanguard. We needed to attract the enemy's attention, so it was necessary for us to move gaudily.

We met the enemy halfway the path from Jirad to Sheng.

“Enemy spotted! There’s about 150 of them! They’re about 4 kilometers away!” A scout reported.

I immediately came up with a plan.

“Take out your spears and shields! We’re assaulting the enemy!” I commanded, prompting Gi Jii to order the rest of the hordes.

We gradually increased our pace as we neared the enemy. Leading the vanguard was the enthusiastic Dashka of Gaidga, who wished to wash away the shame of defeat in his last battle, while the riders of Paradua rode at the flanks.

When the enemy came to view, they numbered 150 just as the scout had reported. They seemed somewhat frightened at seeing us. It seems they hadn’t finished their preparations just yet. I unsheathed my sword.

“Go!!” I commanded, and Dashka bolted off, leading the charge into the opposing elven army.

Gaidga’s brutish strength wasn’t enough to tear through the enemies’ armor. The most they could was to send the enemy elves flying with their clubs.

The enemy was donned in full armor and wielded long swords. A troublesome foe.

We were currently on the offense, but there was no telling how long that would last. Most of my force was made up of normal gobs. Letting Dashka continue fighting seemed to be the best course of action considering our stamina, but if they ran of steam, we would still end up as sitting ducks.

“Gi Za Zakuend!” I called.

“Leave it to me, Your Highness. The enemy’s frontlines shall crumble before our magic,” Gi Za said.

“Go!”

Gi Za took his druid horde and turned to the frontline.

“Fire!” Gi Za commanded, and a volley of magic rained upon the enemy elves.

“Nu...”

But a part of the enemy forces managed to repel even that magic. Are they using srilana or orichalcum? Either way, it’s troublesome.

We have the advantage in numbers, so as long as we’re able to get a good surround, we should be able to win.

“Ru Rou, Fei, take down their eyes. Ru Rou follow Fei’s commands and strike at the enemy forces’ rear guard!” I commanded.

“As you will!” Ru Rou replied, kneeling.

“Understood,” Fei replied.

After Ru Rou took the Ganra horde and ran after Fei, I turned my eyes back to the frontlines. The middle guard led by Gi Jii was supporting the vanguard led by Dashka, while Gi Za’s druids supported them from the back.

Gi Jii has gotten used to leading. He quickly reinforced the frontline whenever a goblin fell. His timings were impeccable.

In that case, I might as well go out myself.

“10 squads! Follow!”

I entered into the fray with 10 three-man cell squads.



The enemy’s unexpectedly powerful attack caused Pale, who was leading from the back, to frown.

“The enemy is much stronger than expected.”

Even the heavy infantry leading the vanguard couldn't overcome the goblins' overwhelming charge. They had their hands full just defending.

More than that, the enemy goblins were strangely variegated, causing Pale to be shocked.

At the enemy's vanguard were goblins bigger than the rest. They brutishly swung their clubs and pushed back Pale's vanguard.

Behind them were smaller goblins with spears. Though 'small', these goblins were only smaller compared to the giant goblins at the front, and they were still much bigger compared to your usual goblin.

There were also goblins who rode on beasts who took a different path from the others and attacked Pale's vanguard, and then there were goblins from the back of the enemy forces who persistently casted magic to support the enemy vanguard.

To make things worse, Pale's archers were being suppressed by the endless volley of arrows shot by the enemy archers.

At this rate, their vanguard won't last even with the srilana armor.

No, the enemy should be nearing their limits. In that case, Pale could eventually dispatch the yet untouched light infantry in her middle guard. Once they're out, they should be able to damage the exhausted enemy forces.

If that doesn't work, she could send them out to take the enemy from behind, cutting their path of retreat off. Either way, victory should be theirs.

Still, though, the goblins were fighting unexpectedly well. So well, in fact, that Pale couldn't help but look on wide-eyed at the goblin forces.

To think the goblins were actually fighting in a formation. Not to mention, with persistence.

"They're strong, but... I can't lose."

If she were to lose here, she wouldn't be able to rescue Selena, as Shure Forni would surely destroy them.

To protect her comrades, she had to win.

“At my signal, send the middle guard in. They are to leave to the right and attack the enemy vanguard!”

Then Pale drew her bow and shot an arrow with unique feathers.

The light infantry behind their vanguard set out. It seemed like they were finally about to take the initiative and push hard into the enemy forces.

“GURUUuoooOAA!”

But just when Pale thought victory was in their hands, a world-shattering howl resounded throughout the battlefield.

When she turned her eyes to the foremost line, she saw a conspicuously giant black goblin jump out. In his hands were a long sword made out of orichalcum, and on his body were flames of black that acted like armor. Just the appearance of the goblin was enough to strike fear in the hearts of the elves and create a crack at their front line.

“Tch! Follow!” Pale immediately drew her bow and shot two arrows, signaling the elven archers at the back. Until now they have been shooting at will, but with the two signals she sent out just now, they stopped shooting and followed her movements. Those two arrows meant “Scatter” and “Follow” respectively.

That goblin cracked open their vanguard. If they left that crack alone, it would gradually grow, until eventually, their vanguard fully collapsed. At that point, they will have no choice but to retreat.

“Aim at that goblin!”

The elven archers have been shooting to suppress the enemy all this time, but now, they focused their arrows on a single target. If that goblin was the spear that would break their frontlines, then they would break it and leave the enemy with no strength left to resist.

Pale ordered the hesitating middle guard as she drew an arrow herself and aimed at the black goblin.

Wind Shot
“Winds, give me power!”

An arrow that filled her vision shot forth toward the Goblin King.



With the orichalcum long sword in hand, I cut down the enemy vanguard. Its durability fell faster compared to the other swords, but it's good.

I lopped off the arms of three more elves before I severed their upper-halves.

“Onwards!” I commanded.

If we keep this up, we can push the enemy dead!

“Your Highness!” Gi Za cried out, prompting me to look up.

I felt my back char as I looked up, then I inadvertently took a step back at the sight that greeted me. An arrow clad in wind was descending toward me.

I deflected it with the orichalcum long sword, but there were more arrows behind it.

Shield
“Tch... Let my body be inviolable!”

Not good! They're using srilana for the arrowheads!

My ether scattered as soon as I invoked it. I tried to brush off the arrows as much as I could, but several still hit me.

When I glanced up again, for a moment, I saw an elven woman.

She's probably the first archer to shoot!

I heard the sound of another arrow shooting forth from her direction.

Is she the commander!?

“Gu!?” I groaned.

“Save the king!” Gi Jii commanded, then the goblins gathered before me and formed a wall. As a result, they ended up being covered in arrows.

Damn it!

“Enough! You don’t have to defend me!” I said, but when I tried to step through the gaps between the normal gobs, I heard some normal gobs crying from the sides. The elves had started to push in from the right. Because of that the goblins had to split their attention between two fronts, causing the vanguard to gradually fall apart.

—This is bad.

I racked my head hard, thinking of a way to quickly turn the situation around.

Even if we keep up our attack, the enemy probably won’t break formation anytime soon. If anything, our side is the one that’s about to break because of that new enemy.

Should we split ourselves into two groups and fight both sides?

No, that would be stupid. We’re barely pushing back the enemy as it is now, if we split our forces, we’d be basically handing ourselves on a silver platter.

What about the other hordes?

I glanced at Gi Za and his druids. They have been casting magic all this time. That only worsened when a new enemy platoon emerged from the right. At this rate, they’ll run out of ether sooner or later.

I turned to Fei and Ru Rou’s archers. They have been suppressing the enemy archers just as I have ordered. Thanks to their efforts, the enemy is unable to perfectly unify their attacks or move as they wish; the enemy is still somewhat able to attack together, though. How strange.

It’s curious how they’re able to do that, and I’d very much like to find out, but unfortunately, I don’t have the time to spare.

“They’re dispersing into the forest,” I mumbled.

With that the suppression fire of the archers will have less effect.

No choice. We'll have to change the flow of battle here.

"Archers, focus fire on the emerging enemy! Stop their movements!" I commanded.

It would be foolish to start defending now after having come this far. If we did that, all that fatigue piled up after our ceaseless attacks might go to waste. We have no choice but to keep on attacking.

—Maintain the status quo at the frontlines while crushing the emerging army from the right!

Fortunately, the enemy emerging from the right are lightly armored. As long as we aim for the gaps in between, even the goblins will be able to handle them.

"Gi Jii, Dashka, Gi Za! I'll leave the front to you!"

After the goblins nodded, I took the goblins under my direct control and headed for the emerging enemy from the right. The goblins are still weak from the battle, but we can't rest yet. As we left our position, Gi Jii ordered new soldiers to fill in our now empty position.

Dashka bellowed out a roar and swung his club, then magic rained from above at Gi Za's call.

"Hal, gather your horde and attack the emerging enemy!" I commanded.

This isn't the time to be caring about some wounds. If this goes on, we're going to lose.

We have our hands full just keeping up. the enemy has completely taken the initiative. Is there any room left for us to turn this around? Perhaps, if we're able to wipe out the new enemy platoon, while maintaining the status quo between the vanguards, maybe then...

If so, this will be a battle of time. Will Gi Za's horde run out of ether first, or will we destroy the right platoon first? If we can't break through, we're going to have to retreat.

—Damn it! Is this what I call a plan!? Fuck!

Though uncertain, I looked up ahead.



“They’re still persisting!” Pale inadvertently said.

She was that surprised at the goblins’ persistence. The black goblin managed to fix their crumbling vanguard, and suddenly, it felt like they were the ones being pushed. The middle guard that went out to attack the goblins from the right were no longer able to move as they pleased because of the black goblin and the enemy archers.

That black goblin would appear wherever the enemy’s formation was about to break.

—He’s dangerous.

Pale’s instincts warned her of the threat that monster poised.

That black goblin hasn’t shifted to an all out offense yet, so Pale’s side hasn’t suffered much losses, but the moment that thing began its attack, they would surely suffer.

“Cover the middle guard!”

There was no reason for the middle guard to push themselves. Their only objective was to attack the enemy’s flank; half of their object had already been accomplished.

Pale was about to shoot another arrow to signal her scattered archers in the forest, but a rain of arrows descended where she was.

Pale dodged the volley of arrows as she rolled on the ground, then she shot an arrow to the sky.

At her signal, her archers once again drew their bows and shot their arrows toward the black goblin.

Let this arrow end this battle!

Barrel Shot
“Winds, give me your blessing!”

The amount of ether poured into this shot was twice as much as last time. That in and of itself was a testament to its destructive prowess, but if it meant killing off that goblin, then it was worth it.

“End this battle!”

An arrow shot from Pale’s bow, and a great number of arrows followed behind it.

For a moment, she thought she saw black flames suddenly rise.

Those black flames moved to clad the black goblin’s sword in its ember.

The Goblin King used its might to repel the descending arrows.

Then more arrows shot for Pale.

She was being targeted. The enemy had already figured out that she was the commander. Their attacks would only get fiercer from here on out.

Thinking that, Pale resolved herself, and then took out another arrow to signal her men, but then something happened that left her shocked.

The enemy elves and goblins were dispersing, while the black goblin turned to the frontlines. Their vanguard, however, was gradually moving back.

“Are they... retreating?”

They most likely intended to retreat like this with the black goblin protecting their rear guard.

But why?

No, the only thing that mattered was that the Goblin-Forni Army was retreating.

Could they pursue them?

Their vanguard would chase the enemy's rear guard, but then the enemy archers shot toward their archers who were scattered in the forest.

It was vexing, but the enemy thought this out well.

With this, they couldn't carelessly pursue them.

"...But don't think we'll let you run so easily," Pale said.

She had to strike when it was time to strike. The goblins' rate of reproduction was just too frightening. If this battle continued, they would eventually have to strike down the goblins' headquarters.

But first they had to pursue them. The fact that they're retreating now meant that they're thinking of the next battle.

Pale had to inflict as much damage as possible.

She shot an arrow to the sky.

It signaled: "The heavy infantry will lead the vanguard as we pursue the enemy."

"Inform the detached force that we won, and are pursuing the wounded beasts now. We're aiming for Jirad."

A messenger was sent to the detached force led by Felbi.

—303 days until the battle with the humans.



Level has risen.

55 => 57

INTERMISSION

A HUNDRED LI (400KM) TO THE NORTH, A PEEK AT THE ABYSS

Status	
Name	Gi Go Amatsuki
Race	Goblin
Level	92
Class	Noble; Wandering Swordsman
Possessed Skills	Sword Mastery B-; Self-Made Man; Veteran; Chivalry; Warrior's Soul
Divine Protection	Sword God (La Paruza)
Attributes	None
Abnormal Status	Sworn to Spare

Many days have passed since Gi Go Amatsuki left the king with Shumea's younger brother, Yoshu. Since then they have been traveling aimlessly through the forests and the flatlands.

Aimless as it was, it wasn't actually possible to travel without a direction, so they decided to make the mountains of the snow god to the north their destination. Part of the reason was also because Gi Go Amatsuki wished to fight with the bandits there.

Gi Go Amatsuki and Yoshu did not go through the forest but through a path close to the human territory. As for why, well... Yoshu had his own ideas.

"The king is going to create a Goblin Kingdom, right? If so, then it shouldn't hurt to gather information about the humans while we travel," Yoshu said.

Because of that Gi Go Amatsuki and Yoshu walked somewhere in between the forest and the flatlands.

Yoshu wasn't lying when he gave that reason, but he also had other reasons for going

through this route. He wanted some things from the human territory.

He was used to living with only the bare necessities due to his overly-adaptive sister, but Yoshu was still a human raised in the city and was unsuited to living in the forest.

Being a former slave, he was also used to life as an adventurer, which is why he wanted to get his hands on some convenient tools. It was to procure those tools that he intentionally suggested this dangerous route near the human territory.

Gi Go wore a robe that covered him from head to toe, while Yoshu carried a shield on his back. From a distance they looked no different from a pair of traveling humans.

During Yoshu's travels with Gi Go Amatsuki, he surprisingly found Gi Go to be quite intelligent. He did not seem like a goblin at all.

Was that because he was a noble class or were the goblins actually always clever and it was only the humans' prejudice that led to the humans' disdain of them? Or then again, it could simply be the king's influence. Yoshu didn't know. But regardless, Gi Go was as smart as your hot-blooded adventurer or battle slave.

For example, the issue of keeping a fire lit during the night.

Beasts are known to fear fire. From time to time, there might be a clever beast or two that would attack despite a lit fire, but in general, beasts stay away from places where there is fire.

Of course, this was completely unrelated to the goblins, as they are monsters who prowl under the blanket of the night, stealing livestock and laying fields to waste... At least, that's what they are supposed to be. But when Yoshu explained to Gi Go the importance of fire – which he did under the pretense that it was to keep from killing needlessly – Gi Go understood and he even went as far as to take turns with Yoshu in keeping watch.

Goblins usually ate meat, but they were also able to eat other things. Only, no matter how much they ate, it wouldn't fill them up. It was a similar feeling to humans who ate nothing but vegetables.

"I know I was just made to tag along, but..." Yoshu muttered.

“Is something the matter?” Gi Ga asked.

“No, it’s nothing. Let’s get some bread in the village.”

“Hmm... Well, just get whatever food you want.”

Yoshu didn’t mention that he actually wanted to see whether bread could fill Gi Go’s tummy or not. In the time he has spent with Gi Go, he has gradually come to consider the coexistence of humans and goblins being a reality.

The body of the fire god was at its peak in the sky. The only sounds in the surroundings were the howls of the beasts that would bellow from time to time and the flying beasts fighting in the sky. The warm rays of the sun were like the gaze of the fire god himself as they descended on the green treetops blessed by the god of the forest and the god of the earth. The singing voice of the god of the wind softened the heat descending from the body of the fire god as it blew and brushed against the traveling pair’s skin.

In this calm atmosphere that was the very symbol of peace, Yoshu looked up at the vast blue sky.

“It sure is great out today,” he said.

“Hmm? Ah, yeah,” Gi Go curtly nodded.

Yoshu wryly smiled at Gi Go’s uninterested response, then he started singing.

“Sow seeds with spring and live with the wind. Drink water with summer and endure hardship. Be glad with autumn and pray for the harvest. Laugh with winter and sleep with the snow. We are the children of the god of fire, we are the children of the god of fire.” (Aruniha, Aruno yusushiagaari. Rannina aruno, gibaseagaari. Arunine, arano, mirinogaari. Fefuru, arono sahishiagaari. Rodou-o-serudo rodou-serdia.)

At the sound of the deep yet perfectly clear melody, Gi Go was stupefied. He looked wide-eyed at Yoshu.

“What’s the matter?” Yoshu asked when he noticed Gi Go staring.

“You can sing?” Gi Go asked.

“Yes. It’s not enough to be a minstrel, but I picked up a couple of songs from my travels in the past,” Yoshu said with a smile.

That was actually the only entertainment Yoshu had back then, but he didn’t mention that part.

“The words are different from the ones you normally use.”

Gi Go and Yoshu started walking again.

“It’s an old language. You don’t hear them nowadays, but they still get used in songs. They’re words from before the great war of the gods.”

“The great war of the gods?”

“You haven’t heard? The corruption of Deetna and the rebellion of the underworld’s Altesia. It was because of the two great wars of the gods that language was scattered.”

Yoshu noticed that Gi Go was becoming more interested.

“Are you interested in songs?”

“Yes, I heard Lord Lili sing before. It was a good song.”

Yoshu became thoughtful. By ‘Lord Lili’ Gi Go was probably referring to the female adventurer that went missing with the saint.

“I see. In that case, I’ll teach you when we find the time.”

“Please,” Gi Go happily said, causing Yoshu to smile.

It was then that a high-pitched scream resounded from the direction of the forest.

“Tch! Ah, Gi Go!” Yoshu exclaimed.

Gi Go had been the first to run. Finding the source of the sound was a trifling matter for someone like Gi Go whose physical abilities and hearing were bolstered.

“Follow,” Gi Go said, as he took out his yet sheathed curved sword and ran into the

forest.

Gi Go ran straight for the screaming maiden. When he saw the goblins attacking her, he stood before them with rage on his face.

“Gi gi!?”

There were about 8 normal goblins attacking. The sudden appearance of a giant monster made the goblins panic and falter.

“You bastards aren’t under my king, are you?”

Even a normal goblin would be much bigger and be better equipped if they were under the king. It stood to reason then that these goblins were savages.

The goblins stood between the fear of death and the allure of a maiden, while a terrifying gaze shot at them from within the hood of that robed monster.

“Gi gi...”

The 8 goblins gradually retreated, but then a goblin suddenly came out of the thickets from a different direction opposite theirs. Fortunately or unfortunately, that goblin went straight for the maiden, causing it to completely miss Gi Go.

“Fool,” Gi Go said as he swung his sheathed sword and bashed the arm of the goblin.

As the goblin squirmed on the ground at the pain, the other goblins, which have been hesitating until now, jumped at Gi Go.

Gi Go’s curved sword swung, and in the blink of an eye, three arms had been broken.

The speed of Gi Go’s curved sword was not something the normal class goblins could match. In the time it took them to attack once, Gi Go attacked three times.

Before anyone knew it, the normal goblins were all crying on the ground.

“You’re too fast,” Yoshu said after finally arriving.

“Hmm... I thought it was someone strong, but it seems I was mistaken,” Gi Go said,

sighing, as he looked down on the goblins rolling on the ground.

“Well, it is a relatively safe path... Anyway, can you stand up, Miss?” Yoshu gently said as he offered a hand.

“Ah, yes,” the young human maiden replied.

“Umm... You people are...” The maiden said as she dusted off her clothes and then timidly folded her arms over her chest.

Yoshu smiled. “As you can see, we are traveling adventurers. We were on our way to the north when we heard a scream. Ah, I’m Yoshu by the way, and this is Mr. Gi Go.”

The maiden timidly bowed her head when the hooded figure whose face could not be seen turned to her.

“We’ll escort you to your village. It would be bad if you happened upon trouble again.” Yoshu gently smiled, and the maiden nodded.

Gi Go quietly followed them from behind, while the maiden would turn with a jolt toward him from time to time.

She spoke to Yoshu. “Umm... You are human, right?”

“Yes, that’s right,” Yoshu said, inwardly sighing at the maiden furtively glancing at Gi Go.

Apparently, it’s been found out already that Gi Go wasn’t human.

“You’re not a bad person, right?” The maiden asked.

“Well, let me see. I’m pretty sure a bad person wouldn’t call themselves bad, but it would be problematic if you associated me with some violent rascal,” Yoshu said in a light-hearted manner, putting the maiden’s heart at ease.

The maiden’s name was Sarsa. Apparently, she was apprentice to a family of doctors.

There was some way until the village, so Sarsa and Yoshu were able to exchange quite a bit of information. There was little entertainment in remote villages, and Yoshu

himself was a good speaker, so they were able to talk about many topics before reaching the village.

When they got to the village, they were promised lodging in exchange for some stories. All this time, Gi Go quietly kept his hood down, taking only food from Yoshu when he offered it.

Gi Go didn't enter the house, and instead sat himself by the fence surrounding the village as he looked toward the west.

His mind was filled with his duels; with his duel with the king, and with his duel with the powerful human warrior, Gowen.

It was precisely because he lost that he yearned to know how he should swing his blade so that he might win.

"Have you won against the king in your mind yet?" Yoshu asked.

"...Challenging the king was a mistake. There can be no victory in a mistake," he replied.

"It's this village's bread. Try it."

"Thanks."

When Gi Go took a bite of the bread, his eyes opened wide.

"Delicious, right? We grind wheat, roll them into a bun, and then bake them to make it," Yoshu explained.

"...Humans are truly amazing," Gi Go said.

After eating the rest of the bread, Gi Go closed his eyes and leaned onto the fence.

"There's still something I want to ask. A dungeon was found around here just recently."

"A dungeon?"

"Yes, a dungeon. From what I know, dungeons are divided into three classes. The Trap of the Evil God's Cellar, the Treasure Room of the Gods, or the Dwelling Place of the

Giant Tiatan. But regardless what type, all dungeons are said to hold many treasures and obstacles.”

“Oh? And?”

“The undead are said to frequently appear in dungeons. How about it? Should we take a look?”

“The undead won’t die even if I cut them... is what you’re saying?”

“Exactly.”

“Thank you. The oath the king imposed on me is because I lost to the Sword God. I need to become strong enough to overpower the sword god before I can return to the king.”

To that end, he had to fight.

“Let’s go tomorrow then. I’ll inform the villagers,” Yoshu said, then he went back to the village.

It was already dusk.

A goblin swordsman swung his sword toward the setting body of the fire god.

“O king, our king. If my will is cut in half, may you live happily, a cowardly retainer less. But if I am able to overcome the sword god, if I am able to make a magnificent return, then...”

When his curved sword returned, he flicked his wrist and swung it once more.

Did he wish for a rematch or did he wish to be acknowledged?

Gi Go swung his sword as he pondered that question.

—304 days until the battle with the humans.

CHAPTER 131

SYLPH UNIFICATION WAR VI

After comparing our forces with the unfaltering enemy elves, I felt it was about time to retreat. We could still keep fighting, but I couldn't think of a way to secure victory.

If we kept this up, we would only be shooting ourselves in the foot. Replacing the fallen elves isn't easy, and the goblins are too far from headquarters. We can't lose here. If we lose here, the dream to conquer humanity will remain but a dream.

"Fei, Gi Ji, we're retreating!" I commanded.

Fei nodded, while Gi Jii was shocked. Regardless, though, they both understood my intentions and promptly passed my orders.

"Fei, take Ru Rou and scatter into the forest! Gi Jii, have the hordes at the front retreat," I gave orders while cutting down the enemy. "I will protect the back."

The three-man-cell groups under me are exhausted, but we have to keep fighting if we are to minimize our losses.

Swinging the orichalcum long sword, I clad it in ether. As the vanguard gradually retreated, the enemy's focus shifted toward me.

Arrows shot from the forest to cover me.

I don't know if this is Fei's or Ru Rou's, but either way, I'm grateful.

"Gi Za, cover me!"

"On it!"

Cyclones sprouted up around me, blowing away the plants nearby and stopping the heavy infantry approaching me.

We continued our retreat like this, but the enemy continued to pursue. Fortunately,

the arrows shooting from the forest were able to slow them down.

“Now! Turn around and run!” I commanded to the goblin vanguard fighting behind me, then we ran toward Jirad.

We lost! Damn it!

The difference in equipment, the knowledge of terrain, the tactics used... There are a lot of things to think about, but right now we have to focus on retreating.

Stifling the sense of loss within me, I ran.



“...Is that?”

Fei had gone ahead to lead his platoon away when he noticed that several trees had been piled up, blocking their way. With the trees fastened together with vines, it would be no easy task to break this obstruction.

They were almost at Jirad, so who could have possibly laid out this obstruction? Then a cold chill struck him.

“Careful, men!” Fei commanded as he looked around him, searching for the enemy.

Only an enemy would do something like this. If so, then an enemy must be waiting for them here.

The worst scenario flashed through Fei’s mind. It was then that arrows rained from above.

“Wind of Heaven’s Blessing!” Fei chanted, casting Wind Shield and deflecting the rain of arrows.

“So it really is an enemy! Have we been surrounded?”

The enemy that should have been pursuing them from behind was suddenly before them.

The more the sight before him bore itself onto his eyes, the harder it was to believe.

The forest surrounding the roads which they traversed was something that could slow down even the elves themselves. Overgrown with plants entangled with vines, it was a kind of place that would obstruct even one's vision.

Now that their path was blocked, they had no choice but to retreat.

They didn't have enough people to overcome the enemy ahead, and neither could they run into the forest, for doing so would be to abandon the goblins coming from behind.

Several elves appeared behind the trees that obstructed the road.

"Foolish citizens of Forni! To think you would actually join hands with the likes of goblins! You are a disgrace!" The enemy elf cried as arrows rained upon Fei and his men.

"Retreat, retreat!" Fei ordered as he glared at that wall of trees that towered over them.

Fei didn't know this, but the one who created this barricade was none other than the Pale's detached force led by Felbi. His job was exactly this, to go around the battlefield and seal the path of the Goblin-Forni Army, then they would wait for Pale's signal, at which they would then perform a pincer attack on the enemy.

"The enemy retreated," Felbi said as he watched Fei and his men retreat from atop a tree. "...Let's proceed according to plan. To Jirad!"



By the time Fei's shrieking report arrived, we had already shaken off the enemy pursuing from behind.

—The enemy is up ahead.

I had to make a decision the moment I received that report.

Should we try and fight with the enemy behind us once more, or should we try and break through the enemy up ahead? Either way, we're going to be hit from both sides.

If we fight against one side, the other side will come to crush our rear guard. That would be bad. If we go out of the road and into the forest, our mobility will be severely crippled; not to mention, we won't be able to move while carrying luggage. I also can't fight more than one front.

The Gaidga and the noble class goblins should also be almost out of steam.

"Fei, is there a path we could use to reach Sinfall from here?" I asked, trying to make myself as calm as possible.

"!?" For a moment, Fei was speechless. "...It's possible. It'll be a narrow path, but we'll probably make it if we go from here."

As Fei swallowed the bitter taste of defeat, I spoke. "Let's go to Sinfall, then. We can't take a pincer attack head on. We have to retreat for now and recover our forces."

"...I understand."

Seeing Fei run again, I couldn't help but sigh.

"This defeat cost us a lot."

Exhaling deeply, I stifled the impatience that tried to overwhelm me and gave an order. "To Sinfall!"

I ran at the back of the army as I prayed for Shure's safety in his search.



"I owe you one," Gi Ji Arsil said.

Bui wryly smiled and waved his hands when he heard Gi Ji say that. And to think he was so averse to them just some time ago.

"Don't sweat it. It's a given for us to help each other," Bui said.

After failing to infiltrate the human fortress and getting wounded, Gi Ji Arsil was picked up and tended to in the orc village. He once tried to leave even though they were only trying to heal him.

The orc village was built around the land where the mother tree was rooted. The life the orcs lived here reminded Gi Ji Arsil of the time when they lived at the Gi Village.

“Will you be able to return to the goblin village?” Bui asked.

“That’s what I intend... I’ve done what I needed to, after all,” Gi Ji Arsil said.

“...Breaking the human fortress alone will be difficult, I believe,” Bui said.

Gi Ji folded his arms and nodded. Gi Ji had a lot of time to think while he was recuperating from his wounds. Those towering stone walls coupled with the length of the fortress itself. It would take a long time if he were to try and scout that whole thing by himself.

There were also those fields and those soldiers that were always patrolling. Trying to infiltrate by one’s self was indeed too dangerous.

The mission he received from Gi Ga Rax, to sound out the humans outside the forest, doesn’t seem feasible alone.

“I think we can work together,” Bui said.

“I can’t make that decision. At the very least, I need to ask Lord Gi Ga,” Gi Ji Arsil said.

When Gi Ji was wounded, it was the orcs who scouted the human fortress. Bui gathered the information they acquired and gave it to Gi Ji. When Gi Ji heard the details of Bui’s findings, he was shocked, and could not help but to change his view of the orcs. To think they were capable of gathering such detailed information.

“Please ask him then,” Bui said.

“I will,” Gi Ji Said.

This orc king was unlike the king. He wasn’t fierce. He wasn’t a king who led with power, but instead led with wisdom.

Of course, Gi Ji’s faith in his king would never waver. It’s just that he realized for the first time that there were kings like this too.

“Farewell, Orc King,” Gi Ji bid farewell and left.

Gi Ji felt he should teach the other goblins how to gather information as well.



“Lord Gi Ga, Lord Gi Ji has returned!” Yellow of Gordob happily reported to the knight class, Gi Ga Rax, who was tasked with protecting the fortress.

Yellow himself was also relieved to see Gi Ji safe and sound. After all, they had just recently sent a messenger to Ganra’s champion, Ra Gilmi, to look for Gi Ji Arsil. Fortunately, he had returned safe and sound.

Gi Ga heaved a sigh of relief when he saw Gi Ji. “It is good to see you safe, Lord Gi Ji.”

“Sorry for worrying you,” Gi Ji bowed, then he told Gi Ga of his findings outside the forest.

Gi Ga rubbed his chin with his only hand. “We should at least gather the people from the tribes and talk this over.”

“If possible, then by all means,” Gi Ji said.

There was a human fortress right outside the forest, and one too big for them to easily subjugate. The wisdom of the tribal chiefs might prove invaluable.

As Gi Ga was thinking that, Gi Ji spoke.

“I have a request. Please give me some goblins,” Gi Ji said.

“What? Well, I don’t mind, but...”

The noble class goblins were all bestowed with a right to have their own household, but most of them were sent away to expand the horde.

Gathering goblins from a land unknown to create a household. By doing so, one truly became the head of a family, possessing a land that belongs only to one’s self. This system is also known as the feudal system, wherein merit is rewarded with territory.

Of course, the goblins didn't understand this. All they knew was that the king trusted them more.

Gi Ji's proposal, however, didn't involve a territory.

Moreover, the goblins received from the king were gifts, they were not supposed to be treated as soldiers.

"I wish to train them to gather intelligence. The way I am now, I am unable to serve the king."

Gi Ga was doubtful upon hearing that. Hasn't Gi Ji faithfully completed all his missions until now?

"From here on, we will be fighting against the humans. Alone, I am insufficient. I need more goblins in order to give the king satisfactory intel."

Finally, Gi Ga understood.

"I see, then in that case, how about the goblins that were recently born..." Gi Ga said when Yellow suddenly barged in.

"Lord Gi Ga! There are strangers knocking on our doors!" Yellow reported.

At that, Gi Ga took his spear and rode on his beloved steed outside.

"W-Who are these people!?"

Before them were a woman that was somewhere in between bird and human, a turtle-like man riding on a beast, and a bull wielding a giant axe.

"Name yourselves! These lands are ruled by our king! Aggression will not be forgiven!" Gi Ga proclaimed on black-tiger-back.

The bird-woman responded. "We are the descendants of the crystals, denizens of the west. We have come here as proof of our friendship with your king."

"...These are different from the ones I met, but these are demihumans," Gi Ji said from behind Gi Ga.

“Hmm... That would make you the king’s guests, then? In that case, welcome.”

As the demihumans reached the Fortress of the Abyss, the goblins and the demihumans gradually got to know each other bit by bit.

—300 days until the battle with the humans.



Gi Jii’s level has risen. 86 => 90

Gi Do’s level has risen. 71 => 81

Gi Za’s level has risen. 51 => 56

Gi Ji Arsil’s level has risen 7 => 14

CHAPTER 132

SYLPH UNIFICATION WAR VII

“Welcome to Jirad,” Jirad Nash said with a clever expression.

He had gone missing during the battle against the goblins. As it turns out, he was actually hiding in the cellar. When Felbi freed Jirad, he came out with his escort demihumans.

“I can’t thank Symphoria enough for the trouble we’ve caused,” Priena, the chief of Sinfall who was chased out of his village, said as he walked up to stand beside Jirad.

“Indeed. Especially, Lord Fenit’s cousin, Lord Pale. I hear her achievements have been spectacular,” Jirad said.

“She defeated the Goblin-Forni Coalition. She should be coming soon, I believe.”

“What a promising individual.”

Felbi was happy to see Nash and Priena so elated.

This was a war to protect their brethren. At the start, they were outnumbered, but through Pale and the other warriors’ effort, they managed to take back a territory. Just a little bit more and they would have half the territories back.

“We’ve prepared a feast. Come, let us celebrate this victory and give rest to the tired warriors,” Jirad Nash said.

The warrior elves cheered at that. Felbi looked serious, but he was actually secretly happy.

The feast continued late into the night. When the elven warriors had all fallen asleep, Nash and Priena stood together with an evil smile on their face as they looked on at the sleeping warriors.

“What honest and nice children they are,” Jirad said.

“Indeed. They are so nice they are even willing to fight for us. Cheering is the least we could do, don’t you agree?”

Jirad had been freed, but Sinfall was yet occupied by the Goblin-Forni coalition. These two chiefs could not fight a war themselves, so they figured they would entice these warriors to fight for them instead.

In doing so, not only would they recover their territories, they would also create a rival for Fenit. The more Pale shone, the bigger of an eyesore she became to Fenit. Eventually, the two cousins would end up against each other. And once this war – which Forni started – ended, most of the elven powers will have been weakened, leaving Jirad and Sinfall ahead.

At this time, Pale was still in the dark of these two elves’ scheme.



As soon as I got to Sinfall, I sent a platoon to contact Shure. Leading that platoon was the elf, Fei.

“Sorry, I know you haven’t gotten any rest, and yet...” I said.

“For Lord Shure, I will go out anytime no matter how exhausted I may be,” Fei said before turning heel and departing.

I see. He might look calm on the outside, but he’s actually worried sick over Shure.

We need to rescue them before they fall into a predicament. I hope they’re safe. Once we’ve secured them, we will have to recover our forces. The Gaidga goblins were so tired they fell asleep as soon as we stopped; the normal goblins too.

“You called, Your Highness?” Gi Za Zakuend said.

I called him to talk about our plans.

“What’s the situation?”

How many can fight? How many have withdrawn? How many have died?

“There are only 140 goblins left who can fight. The elves are less than a hundred.”

In just one battle almost 100 soldiers were incapacitated. That’s too much. Especially considering all the battles we have left.

Only about half can fight again, though given time, we will have about 260 soldiers again.

The enemy lost some soldiers too, but there’s no telling their circumstances. For the meantime, we will have to stay on the defense.

—No, that won’t do. If I did that, the enemy will just take the initiative again.

Stop. I shouldn’t only be looking at the battlefield in front of me. I should look at the whole war.

I sighed at that realization and changed my perspective.

“...How about using small forces to engage in guerrilla warfare?” Gi Za suggested.

I nodded. That’s one way. The roads here might be connected to the various forests, but the only path to Forni is through Sinfall.

“In one sense, it could be said the enemy helped us lessen the scope we need to cover,” I said.

With this, a small force will be enough to defend. Not to mention, I’ll also be able to let my goblins gain experience.

“A war will result in more casualties, however; how are we to supplement the fallen soldiers?” Gi Za pointed out.

“Do we have to contact Gi Ga after all?” I agreed.

Where there is war, there are casualties. It doesn’t matter whether one is the victor or the defeated, that is an unchangeable truth for all parties involved.

The enemy we are facing now doesn’t seem weak either.

What to do? It would take a considerable amount of time to go to and fro the Fortress of the Abyss. Will we have to fight with small groups until then? In the end, it comes down to whether we will be able to fight while minimizing our losses.

What about the elves? Will they be able to recover their numbers? I need to ask Shure once he returns.

Minimize our losses, improve our equipment, and ensure there is a path of retreat.

“Some equipment from the elves would be nice,” Gi Za said.

I nodded.

For now, let's do what we can.



The moment Jirad and Sheng's savior, Pale, entered the village with her men, an ardent welcome greeted them.

“To Commander Felbi and Pale Symphoria!”

Praise poured down on Felbi and Pale.

“Pale, you were marvelous!” Felbi said.

When Felbi appeared, he came with the various high-ranking elves from Sinfall along with the chieftains of Jirad and Sheng.

Felbi was all smiles as he received these high-ranking elves' praise, but Pale found this situation dangerous.

“Can we talk for a bit?” Pale asked Felbi.

The chieftains and all the bigwigs were all acting as if they had already won the war.

“Can't we talk with them around?” Felbi asked.

“If you don’t mind, we’d like to join your discussion. Forni is a common enemy between us all. We may not be skilled, but we may be able to be of some help,” one of the high-ranked elves said.

“Right! There are people from Sheng, Jirad, and Sinfall here. We could—” Felbi said.

“...I would prefer we be alone,” Pale insisted, causing Felbi to shrug.

Pale and Felbi left the sea of people to a quiet corner where they could talk.

“Are you... angry?” Felbi asked.

“I am not. I just think it’s dangerous,” Pale said, inclining her head to hide her expression.

Felbi scratched his head, troubled. “You know, Pale. The chiefs aren’t so dangerous. They’re cooperative and they want to see Forni defeated too. They agreed to support us, and on top of that, they’re even allowing us to act as we please.”

“That’s true, but...”

Since they left the forests of Symphoria, they have been receiving support from Sheng. It was because of that that they were able to fight the Goblin-Forni army. To begin with, their arrows weren’t infinite, and neither were their weapons indestructible. The more they fought, the more their weapons would be expended.

If they could get Jirad’s support as well, they would be able to fight without worrying about supplies.

Food, weapons, armor, arrows, and perhaps even people.

If they could just get Jirad’s support, they would be able to act much more freely.

“Let me think about it,” Pale said.

“Alright,” Felbi nodded.

Pale left and walked alone to the bathhouse.

Every large elven village had a bathhouse; they were usually built near a lake of pure water. The elves had just come from a war, however, so there was no one in sight.

Pale took off her clothes, then submerged herself in the water of the bathhouse. The water reached up her shoulder as it sought to take away the stench of blood from her flesh.

There was a waterfall in the facility, wherein water showered down from an elevated area. Pale went there and prayed.

“God of Wind, Castor, and Goddess of Water, Iren, please guide your children. God of Forests, Chenzhen, please bless us with your divine protection,” Pale prayed.

She repeated those words three times, and then she cried for her brethren who died at her command.

Was she really in the right? She wasn’t sure. She could only washed herself to clear away her doubts.

My dear child, my dear child. A voice suddenly said, prompting Pale to doubt her ears.

“!?”

But then black winds whirled, and suddenly there was a black biting louse with a black feather in front of her.

...Why are you so sad, my dearest?”

From its stiff jaws came out a gentle voice.

“You are...”

I am that which watches over you.

At that, a soft wind wrapped around her, and then in the next moment, the faces of her dead brethren vanished from her mind.

“Uu, uu...” All the pent-up emotions Pale had been keeping came out as tears. They slid down her cheeks and dripped down to the water to be washed away.

My dear child, the war will only become worse from here. Please don't die.

After the black biting louse said that it vanished.



A huge rock was lifted off my shoulders when I heard that Shure and Shunaria had returned safely.

“At least you’re safe,” I said.

“Lately, I’ve been causing you nothing but trouble,” Shure said.

His face was cheerful despite that; that was probably because of Shunaria.

The members of the transport squad retreated to all directions, so there were several people who managed to survive.

“Umm, Goblin King,” Shunaria timidly said as she approached me.

“It’s good that you’re safe,” I said.

“About the sword the smith entrusted to me...”

“Ahh, it’s fine. I’m just happy that you’re safe.”

“No, that’s not it... Actually, it’s here.”

Unexpected. Apparently, it was because Shunaria had it prioritized when they were attacked.

When the great sword came, I almost couldn’t believe my eyes. It actually took two people to carry it.

“It’s name is The Great ^{Flamberge}Sword that Dances th. It was made with alloy consisting of blue-silver steel (srilana), which has good affinity with magic power, and the steel of your old blade.”

I listened to her explanation as I took the sword and examined it.

The great sword stood as tall as me, one side shaped like a flame, the other shaped like a normal blade. There was a symbol of a flame carved on the black blade. She mentioned it was made out of blue-silver steel (srilana) and steel, that must be why there's a silver color running through the center of the blade until the tip.

The sword had been reborn, but it felt just like the old great sword (Iron Second) I used.

"Masterfully made," I said.

It's almost enough to make me fall in love.

I swung the sword several times outside to get a feel for it. The sound of wind being cut and the weight of the sword in my hands. Yes, this is indeed a trustworthy blade.

Enchant
"Turn me into a blade!"

Ether burst out of the blade that was shaped as if it were dancing. It was almost as if the ether was completing its shape. The ether drew the course of the blade as it flowed into it, and as a result, the sword seemed to go faster.

As I slashed overhead, the ether followed my sword down.

The power gathered behind the descended blade was greater than before. Just the pressure emanating from it was enough to send leaves flying.

The sword was so sharp it seemed as if a sweep would be enough to cut the heavens themselves.

I looked at the sword again.

Flamberge
"The Great Sword that Dances th, huh."

I got a good sword.

This war must be won.

As strength brimmed from within, I looked toward the south.



“Spears, advance!”

The spear platoon made out of goblins equipped with blue-silver steel stepped out. At the same time, the elven archers supported them with their arrows. We marched for Jirad, which had been reclaimed by the enemy.

The normal goblins lined their spears and struck simultaneously at the enemy soldiers in our path. The enemy soldiers held up their shields and blocked the goblins’ attack head on. When the enemy saw that the attack was successfully blocked, they sent their soldiers to take our flanks.

The place we were battling at right now was one of the stopping points of the road connecting Sinfall and Jirad.

The battle was already spreading to the smaller villages.

There were many smaller villages around every big elven village. The main road connected to the big elven village was branched out to the smaller villages, forming something akin to a plaza.

The place we were fighting at was exactly that.

We specifically chose this place, as it’s the only place that could allow our platoons enough leeway to let them train.

“Gaidga soldiers, slam those swordsmen approaching from the left!”

The Gaidga goblins swung their clubs and pushed back the enemy soldiers.

“Gi Jii! Stop the enemy platoon coming from the right!”

“As you command!”

A storm of arrows and magic descended on the right enemy platoon, forcing them to stop. That gave us just enough time to escape the enemy's surround.

It was then that I gave my next command.

“Spears, retreat!”

The first thing we need to do is to find a method that won't let us lose, then we'll fight and retreat sparingly. So long as we keep this up, the gap between us and the enemy will remain the same.

Moreover, while I am still leading the whole army, the platoons themselves are already being led by the young goblins like Gi Jii. Like this, they will gradually gather experience in the arts of war, and eventually, they will be able to lead an army by themselves. I have to patiently raise them up until that day.

The war has just begun.

—296 days until the war with the humans.

CHAPTER 133

SYLPH UNIFICATION WAR VIII

I buried my sword into the ground and burned the scene in front of me into my eyes.

Right now, the elves were chasing after my goblin subordinates. Their swords buried into the retreating backs of the goblins, giving rise to many death throes.

—Not yet...

“My king! Please forgive me.” The wide-eyed Gi Jii knelt before me and bowed his head.

“Go,” I curtly said as I waved my hand to dismiss him, then I pulled out my great sword.

The Sword that Dances with the Black Flames, Flamberge.

I carried that sword that was as long as I was tall on my shoulder, then I turned to the counter attack platoon behind me and declared, “We are the warriors of the Demon Children of Chaos... Fear is cowardice! So howl!”

In the next moment, a great battle cry bellowed out from the horde.

“Attack!” I ordered the goblins over that great cry, then I turned toward the approaching enemy and ran toward them.

The enemy was so numerous it was almost as if the land had been replaced by them. Exhaling a faint breath, as if to release all that pent-up vigor I had, I inclined my posture forward and glared at the enemy.

“GURUuOoOoAaA!” I howled.

The howl continued behind me.

I measured distance between our approaching armies with my eye, then I directed ether to flow into my great sword.

Enchant
“Turn me into a blade!”

As ether rose from the dancing-shaped blade of my great sword, I swung it.

The enemy was there to greet it, but the long sword he used to try receive my sword was cut alongside him.

After severing the enemy in two, I swept with my great sword to wipe away the flowing blood from its blade, then I bared my fangs once more.

This time the enemy welcomed me with their shields, so I sent flying away with them. Just a little, a crack had formed on the enemy’s formation.

Stepping forward, I swung my great sword overhead and swung it down on a clump of enemy soldiers.

As I wrecked havoc on the enemy soldiers, the sound of iron clashing with iron rang behind me.

The now pursuing goblins were fighting with the enemy elves.

They were equipped with blue-silver steel (srilana) equipment, but they were all actually just normal class. As a race, they were weaker than the Gaidga, slower than the Paradua, and were less dexterous than the Ganra, yet they desperately followed my back into the enemy platoon that had just destroyed Gi Jii’s forces and were counterattacking.

They lined up their spears and fought desperately while covering each other and substituting the injured whenever needed.

The elves fought desperately too.

The place we were fighting at was one of those stopover villages between Sinfall and Sheng. This one in particular was closest to Sinfall.

It wasn’t easy coming up with a plan that minimized losses against these clever elves, so I prioritized minimizing our losses and buying time over protecting the villages.

In order to raise goblin commanders, I have intentionally led this counterattack platoon myself and protected the other platoon as they retreated. To that end, I even chose to personally undertake the duty of stopping the enemy.

The enemy seems to have noticed my intentions, considering their attacks have become even fiercer.

—But...

I ground my teeth.

The corpses of my fellow warriors who I couldn't save filled my vision. We couldn't attack any earlier because of the plan. The reason this counterattack could become a success was because the enemy was properly lured. That's why we were able to stop them now. That's why we were able to execute this counterattack.

But while I might understand that in my head, I still couldn't stop the rage burning within me from rising.

I swung my great sword fearlessly and took down enemy after enemy.

Killing my subordinate is like taking away my limbs.

—You will pay!

“GURUuRUooOaAaAa!”

In my fury, I bellowed out The World Devouring Howl. Its great power suppressed everyone around me, but then arrows came shooting from afar.

—As usual, their response is fast. The enemy is serious too.

I swept with my great sword to fend off the enemy's concentrated attack, but I couldn't fend everything off. There were countless arrows clad in ether mixed in with the normal arrows.

Wind, water, fire, those varied arrows came pouring down on me endlessly. At the same time, I had to deflect the attacks of the enemy pouring in from the flanks, while I cut the enemy down.

There wasn't a second attack, however.

—This should be a good time.

“Retreat! To the right!” I pointed my great sword to the right and commanded.

I stood at the rearguard of the retreating goblins.

We all ran until we reached a narrow road, where arrows then shot from the sea of trees at our flanks.

These were of course Forni's archers.

Like that we successfully retreated to Sinfall.



The assassin, Gi Ji Arsil, left the Fortress of the Abyss and departed for the elven territory. According to the messenger that arrived a few days ago, the king was currently fighting a difficult battle with the elves.

“There sure are a lot of goblins. I thought the last horde was big. Who would've thought there'd still be so much left?” One of the eight flags of the demihumans, Mido of the werewolves, said while walking beside Gi Ji.

The fang tribe, the werewolves, were great warriors who possessed exceptional strength and speed. They ran the plains with their friends, the gray wolves, so it was fairly unsurprising that they were able to bring the king's message quickly.

But because they weren't very bright, they ended up quarreling with the goblins in front of the Fortress of the Abyss, causing much annoyance to the demihumans who came to fulfill their part of the cultural exchange.

Behind Gi Ji Arsil were 80 normal goblins from the knight class, Gi Ga Rax, and 50 volunteer warriors from the tribes.

“For the king, we will offer even our flesh and bones,” Gi Ji said, still glaring at the direction where the goblins and the elves were fighting.

Mido shrugged. "Well, we also have debt with our benefactors that need to be paid. I'd like to go in high spirits too, but..."

Rumors are said to move faster than the wind itself.

True to that saying, word of the matter regarding Jirad's enslaved demihumans had already reached the demihumans outside the elven forests.

Gi Ji turned to the fiercely smiling Mido. "Descendant of the crystal, right? Have you also sworn fealty to the king?"

Mido broke out laughing. "Bwa ha ha ha! Like hell we'd swear fealty to some goblin."

But almost immediately after he stopped laughing and turned to Gi Ji with an angry glare. "But I'm not without sense of duty. That goblin bastard raised a friend's children, so... I have a duty to him. For that I will lend him my strength."

Gi Ji nodded to the words of this demihuman chief who was also known as 'Tyrant'. "...I know a man just like you. A goblin whom the king lauded a swordsman; a warrior who pointed his blade at the king."

"Oh? Seems like someone I could get along with."

"He was strong, so strong that he didn't hesitate to wield his sword against the gray wolves for the sake of his brethren. But because he was so strong, he pointed his blade at the king."

"What happened to him?"

Gi Ji shook his head, almost as if he was trying to shake away the image of that distant back, then he looked ahead of him again. "He went somewhere far away, but... I'm sure one day he will come back."

Right now, Gi Ji couldn't reach that goblin he admired.

"...We have to be strong," Gi Ji said. "Other than us, the king doesn't have anyone to protect him."

Gi Ji and Mido entered a village ruled by the Eight Flags and began preparations for the trip to the elven territory.



The coalition force led by Pale and Felbi already numbered 400 after receiving the support of Sheng and Jirad.

With manpower and the power of blue-silver steel equipment, the strength of their force was indeed something to be feared. That coupled with Pale's strategies, which has survived the storms of the human world, and Felbi's heroic leadership at the frontlines, they have already secured 10 victories all-in-all.

Though most of those were only from small skirmishes fought in the stopover villages between the large villages of Sheng and Sinfall, they still spoke of the greatness of the two leaders. Especially Pale, whose achievements were so dazzling it could only be said that she was blessed by the spirits themselves. Where she fought, the enemy would surely retreat.

Contrast Felbi who often stood at the frontlines with a smile on his face, earning him the title of the Forest God's Favorite Child, Pale rarely smiled; yet that figure of hers as she led with the draw of her bow was extolled as the personification of the god of bows, Za Ruga.

Like this Pale became famous.

Being supported by her comrades in war and the chiefs of Sheng and Jirad should by no means be a bad thing. Unfortunately, the chiefs had another agenda. They hoped she would become Fenit's rival; that's why they supported her.

When Fenit Symphoria, the man who currently possessed the most power among the sylphs, saw Pale Symphoria basking in glory, he became furious.

After Sheng and Jirad recovered from Shure Forni's trap, they had been supporting Fenit's soldiers while sending soldiers to the other forests. It was actually because of them that Pale and Felbi were able to fight. Otherwise, Pale's battles would have been much more difficult. Especially since Symphoria hasn't actually been supporting Pale and Felbi.

The more the threat that was the Goblin-Elf Coalition subsided, the more Fenit was reminded of the threat that was Pale.

“As expected of the Symphoria,” Jirad Nash praised.

“Indeed, I’m sure Fenit is proud,” Priena added.

“...Of course,” Fenit bitterly agreed with a sneer.

Pale was supposed to have fallen into a predicament, but now? She had climbed her way out of the ditch and was shining brilliantly.

Fenit felt threatened.

“...It seems the goblins won’t be a threat anymore. I’ll be going home then,” Fenit said, turning heel despite the protests of Jirad Nash and Priena.

Fenit’s soldiers surely wouldn’t be happy to receive such a sudden order. An elf tried telling Fenit that as he left, but when Fenit saw who that elf was, his brows creased for an instant, then he sneered and walked away.

That female elf followed after him.

—276 days until the battle with the humans.



Level has risen.

57 => 59

CHAPTER 134

SYLPH UNIFICATION WAR IX

“Your Highness!” Gi Ji Arsil cried out.

He had finally arrived after a long trip. At his call, the goblins, who were seeing me for the first time, raised their weapons toward the heavens..

It’s been 34 days since we lost to the elves at Jirad. After welcoming the reinforcements from the headquarters, we’ve finally began preparations to execute our counterattack.

The goblins numbered 240 all-in-all, while the elves numbered 150. The demihumans also brought 70 warriors to join in our battle.

“You sure? We’re not fighting against humans, though,” I said.

“Huh? I didn’t come here for you. I came here for the elves,” Mido said.

Nikea nodded. “I’ll be expecting much from you again, Goblin King.”

Nikea is as polite as ever, I see.

The goblins that came were all excellent. Of note was the noble, Gi Ji Arsil, and the duke, Rashka of Gaidga.

“Looks like I can finally let loose,” Rashka excitedly said.

It seems watching the house has caused him a lot of stress.

The Eight Flags of the demihumans brought with them 40 warriors from the Fang Tribe plus 40 gray wolves, while the araneae brought 30 warriors along with Nikea.

“The formations are ready, Your Majesty,” Gi Jii said.

After all the battles we experienced, Gi Jii finally managed to evolve.

Status	
Name	Gi Jii Yubu
Race	Goblin
Level	1
Class	Noble
Possessed Skills	One Who has Walked through Death; Battle Demon; Versatile Master; Adjutant's Knowledge; Sword Mastery C+
Divine Protection	None
Attributes	None

One Who has Walked through Death

Remains calm even while facing death. Resistance to confusion (MEDIUM).

Battle Demon

Bonus to leadership toward one's horde and army.

Versatile Master

Can use any weapon up to C Rank.

Adjutant's Knowledge

Due to fighting with the master's horde, bonus to defense and critical rate (LOW).

There were also two normal goblins who became a rare class. A druid was also recently born.

Status	
Name	Gi Ah
Race	Goblin
Level	1
Class	Rare
Possessed Skills	One Who Encroaches into the Divine Region; Sword Mastery C-; Bloodsucker; Overpowering Howl
Divine Protection	Night God
Attributes	Darkness

One who Encroaches into the Divine Region

Can enter barriers. The success rate depends on the level of the barrier (LOW ~ MEDIUM).

Bloodsucker

Due to drinking the blood of elves and demihumans, abilities have been increased.

Status	
Name	Gi Ii
Race	Goblin
Level	1
Class	Rare
Possessed Skills	Leadership D-; Sword Mastery C-; Explorer; Overpowering Howl
Divine Protection	None
Attributes	None

Explorer

Mobility is increased.

Status	
Name	Gi Uu
Race	Goblin
Level	1
Class	Druid
Possessed Skills	Leadership D-; Pursuer of Knowledge; Adjutant's Knowledge; Magic Manipulation; Water Bending
Divine Protection	Water God (Iren)
Attributes	Water

Pursuer of Knowledge

Due to the Goddess of Wisdom's blessing, intelligence growth has increased.

With this we have acquired both number and quality.

The iron equipment the goblins will be outfitted with are being transported from the demihuman villages by the new centaur chief, Tianos.

Blue-silver steel would be better, but it wasn't feasible to have the entire army outfitted with it. The yields are just too low and we don't have enough time. We have to make use of what we had.

"The advantage in number is undeniable," Shure said during the war meeting.

I nodded. We may have been pushed to Sinfall, but we aren't disadvantaged in any way.

"But the enemy is definitely strong. If I recall correctly, her name is Pale Symphoria," I said.

Shure nodded. "It's good we were able to make the prisoners talk. Who would've thought the enemy would be someone from the human territory."

Pale Symphoria, cousin to the current chief of Symphoria, Fenit. She has been working as an adventurer until recently.

"Pale?" Shumea, who was usually sleeping during the meeting, reacted to that name.

"What? Is she famous?" I asked.

Shumea shook her head. "No, she's not famous, but... I feel as if I've heard that name somewhere."

After a moment, Shumea suddenly stood up with a look of shock on her face.

"I remember!" she said. "That's the person Selena is looking for!"

Selena?

Oh, come to think of it, she did mention something about looking for someone, didn't she?

"Maybe we could have her try persuade that enemy commander then?" I said.

Shumea folded her hands and made a difficult face. "I hope you don't take offense to

this, but do you have the leisure to? You shouldn't let your guard down just because you have more soldiers."

Suddenly, it was as if she understood something, and she made a bitter face.

We did have more soldiers, but we didn't have the territory to develop them.

Though even if we did have territory, the enemy would just invade it.

"what do you think would be the best course of action?" I asked Shumea.

"A war of attrition," she bitterly said.

"Right," I nodded. "We will forcibly make the enemy bleed make the most of our numerical advantage."

We won't lose. In the narrow woods, the ones who will come out victors will be us.

It will be a victory secured atop the piled corpses of friend and foe alike.

I turned to look at the faces of those who would be joining that bloody war.

Actually, there is another way to win, but it's just too much of a gamble.

The losses will be great, but victory will certainly be within grasp. Something like this should pass for a plan, right?

"But won't there be too much casualties?" The shaman, Gi Za Zakuend, asked.

I knit my brows. "Do you have a better plan?"

Gi Za groaned and another goblin spoke.

It was the recently evolved noble class, Gi Jii Yubu.

"Your Highness, how about luring the enemy into Sinfall?" He said.

"I considered it, but it's too big of a gamble. If they occupy the village before us, it will be the same as handing them the village on a silver platter."

To begin with, this isn't our village.

The enemy knows more about it. They should also know where the defenses of the village are.

Suddenly, the doors opened and an old elf walked through and said, "then let me show you how to make that plan a certainty."

Immediately, Shure stood up. "Shifon (Teacher)!"

"I am Falun Gastair. It's a pleasure to meet everyone," the old elf introduced himself.

That introduction was so perfect it was like something straight out of a movie.

"Did you overhear us?" Shure asked.

"It took awhile to bring my village under control. My apologies I wasn't there when you needed me," Falun said.

"Please don't be, shifon."

From their exchange, I was somehow able to figure out their relationship.

"Well, let's leave the introductions at that," Falun said.

Can he be trusted? I asked Shure with a gaze, and he nodded to indicate that it was alright.

"...And? What is this plan of yours?" I asked.

Falun answered in a quiet voice.



"I see... So the goblins have brought reinforcements."

2 days after Gi Ji Arsil reached the king, Pale received a report from one of her scouts.

Sinfall was just a little further ahead.

The elven army with her now numbered 400. That included the forces of Sheng and Jirad.

The forces of Symphoria never came, however.

Between Pale and Felbi, Pale had a bigger voice in leading the army, but it was still much smaller compared to the nobles who were supporting this war. Sheng and Jirad's voices were too big. The elven world was similar to the human world in that those with a certain blood flowing through their veins had a greater voice than those without.

"Master Pale, let us attack Sinfall here!" One of the soldiers from Sheng and Jirad said.

These elves have been winning so much that they started to believe they could win even without a plan. In fact, such talk became so common among these soldiers that their eyes eventually became blinded with pride.

"No, we should retreat temporarily here."

Sinfall was right before their eyes, yet Pale decided to retreat.

A commander might think courage would be necessary at a time like this, but Pale had her own thoughts.

When it came to strategy, the goblins were still below her level. Be it their intel, their timing in picking their fights, their concentration, or their schemes, they were still far below her.

Which is why she decided to use the stopover villages to pile up victory after victory.

The goblins they were fighting now was only the tip of the iceberg; more would yet come.

From her days as an adventurer, Pale knew that the goblins would never stop unless their headquarters was crushed or their master was killed. She did not know where the goblin's headquarters was, but even if she did know, she wouldn't be able to go past Forni without going through Sinfall, so she decided not to occupy the stopover

villages.

There was no point in aiming for the goblin headquarters or any other targets. The only thing they needed to set their sights at was the master of the goblins, that black one.

“What are you saying, Master Pale!? We have finally taken the stopover villages from the enemy. Why would you give them back? Have we shed our brethren’s blood in vain!?”

“Their sacrifice wasn’t in vain. We...”

These soldiers believed that the only reason the Goblin-Forni army lost was because of their internal issues. Hence, it was not because they were inferior to Pale that they only started winning now. Because of that kind of thinking, however, these soldiers from Sheng and Jirad have become quite obstinate in pushing their opinions.

Pale once used internal discord to deal Shure Forni a powerful blow, but now that she was on the receiving end, she didn’t know what to do. To begin with, this army was made up of many armies, so it was only a given that it would be trifling to ask to lead it.

“What we should be prioritizing now is—”

“—Reporting!” An elf suddenly yelled as he ran into the conference room with ragged breath. The three reports he brought greatly roused the people participating in the meeting.

The goblins and the elves have broken off with the demihumans, and Sinfall has been abandoned.

The moment Pale heard the report, a shock ran through her head almost as if a club had hit her.

“Fortune smiles at us! Let us take Sinfall at once—”

“You must not! It is a trap!”

Pale, who usually always kept her calm, suddenly spoke in a loud voice, causing the

whole room to go silent.



“Pale is at... Symphoria?”

After the meeting, Selena cried to herself, as she pondered to herself what to do.

“What should I do?”

Her goal was to reunite with Pale. The king himself had promised her that. The elven chief, Shure Forni, had also promised her that. Shure and the Goblin King both promised her that they would bring peace to the elves.

Everyone promised her, and yet...

“What should I do?”

If she just stretched out her hand, she would be able to reach Pale.

Selena’s heart shook.

Was it really alright for her to stay here?

Heat rushed up her head.

It was then that a pair of arms held her from behind.

“Uuu...”

Selena choked because of the sudden embrace.

“What are you moping around for?” A voice asked from behind her.

“Miss Shumea...” Selena said.

Shumea heaved a sigh at that damp voice as she held Selena tight.

“You were thinking bad things, weren’t you?”

“I wasn’t...”

“The goblin boss, me, that Shure guy... everyone here is your friend and are worried about you. You know, you really should treasure yourself first before thinking about your benefactor.”

Selena cast her eyes down and Shumea continued. “Listen to me, alright? It’s never good to think that it’s alright to sacrifice yourself for another person. If you’re going to use your head, use it to get the best results.”

“The best results...”

“Right. When I was a kid, someone once told me these words: “I’m going to aim for the happiest end, otherwise, there’s no meaning in life.”

Selena cried at Shumea’s warm words.

—264 days until the war with the humans.

CHAPTER 135

SYLPH UNIFICATION WAR X

Tl Note: Correction – The goblins left the demihumans with the elves, not that the goblins left the demihumans and the elves.

“You sure about this?” I asked.

“Yeah, do it,” Mido said with a fearless smile.

As all eyes gathered on me, I spoke in a loud voice. “This demihuman refuses to obey me! He dares spout an opinion different than mine! Such an act is equal to putting a hedge between us goblins and the elves. He may be a demihuman chief, but he will not be forgiven for this transgression!”

The fact that I was basically explaining everything made the whole thing seem like one big joke, but I had to, as it was necessary to make what was going on as easy to understand as possible.

“You call abandoning the elves and running with your tail in between your legs a strategy!?” Mido said.

“It seems you still fail to see the error in your ways!” I said as I made a gaudily loud whipping sound with the whip in my hands.

“GUuNU!” Mido cried out in pain though he tried to stifle it.

I smiled. “Do you understand yet?”

“You think a weak attack like this...”

“Pin him down!” I ordered the goblins, then I proceeded to whip Mido.

Mido tried to argue, but I ignored his arguments and unjustly whipped him.

That was the show we put on, and we continued it for about 30 minutes.

“Hmph, if you understand, then from now on, you’ll do well to remember your place!”

A horrible performance if I say so myself, but it’s still better than not trying. I even concluded this joke of a play by unnaturally kicking Mido away.

“Into the gaols!” I said.

I went back to the old chief’s house, and after making sure there was no one around, sat and exhaled deeply.

“You seem exhausted,” Shunaria said.

I wryly smiled. “It’s still exhausting even if we’re just acting... Or rather, it’s precisely because we’re acting that it’s exhausting. Sigh... I don’t want to ever do this again.”

“Really? I thought goblins would be a bit more... Umm, forget it.”

“Cruel? Monsters who like to oppress others?”

“...Yes,” Shunaria embarrassedly admitted.

“You’re not wrong. We goblins are indeed bloodthirsty, cruel, and sadistic, but I’m... No, my subordinates are different,” I said. “We are warriors. War is a tool to make the world acknowledge us. We can’t be forbearing, no. Forbearance is a privilege of the victor. The defeated has no room for it or pity. Until now we were losers. People like that don’t have that privilege of forbearance, but that’s going to change from here on out.”

The black snake, Verid, who was coiled around my right arm and the will of the twin-headed snake imbued in the gem on my left hand stirred.

“Yesterday’s winners will not necessarily be today’s winners. We might be 10,000 steps late, but we will still rise and challenge the humans who rule this world. To that end, we must become strong. In body, of course, but also in mind.”

Exhaling a faint breath, I thought of Pale Symphoria, the enemy who I have yet to meet.

“This time for sure, we will win. We will win and unite the sylphs. After that, I’m thinking of forming a bond of true friendship with your dad.”

“Do you truly intend to do those things?”

“But of course. I was born, after all, so I might as well aim for the peak.”

Perhaps it’s too hard for these elves who think the forest is everything.

“...I can’t understand,” Shunaria said. “But I do understand that you’re special. Whether it’s the demihumans or the goblins, I believe the reason they choose to follow is because of you.”

We have our will, yes, but that’s all we have.



“It’s been a while, I suppose. Still... the gall you have to actually show your face, Falun,” Fenit said angrily.

He was so angry that his face convulsed while he glared at the old man standing before him.

“Don’t be so cold. You know it’s really hard for an old man like me to stand around talking like this. Isn’t Lord Fenit, the great chief, a tolerant man toward people with profitable information?”

The pressure of this elder before him was enough to make Fenit’s anger subside a little, calming him down just enough to regain his mind.

“I have no need for flattery. I will be the one to decide whether your information is profitable or not. To declare the information you have so surely is just plain hubris,” Fenit said.

Falun softly laughed as he played with his white beard. “Then please decide for yourself, great chief.”

Falun shared two intel: The schism between the demihumans and the goblins, and the withdrawal of the goblins and the elves from Sinfall.

The moment Fenit heard that he became both bewildered and on guard.

It was just too good a story. But after listening to Falun's silver tongue for a while, his unbelieving face turned to one of chuckling.

"It seems Shure, despite being renowned a hero for so long, has finally become unable to keep the leash on the goblins. Well, they are good-for-nothing brutes who only know to destroy," Falun said.

"How foolish. To control a beast, you need a whip. It seems he didn't know even that," Fenit agreed.

After considering for a while, Fenit decided to offer Falun a seat.

"Thank you," Falun said when he saw Fenit's actions, which could only mean that he saw value in the information he offered.

"So, only the demihumans are in Sinfall then?"

"Yes. The goblins have been incurring nothing but losses because of Lord Pale, after all."

Fenit turned away from Falun, glaring at the wall, then he turned back to Falun.

"Occupying Sinfall should... be a trifling task then?" Fenit asked slowly.

Falun nodded. "It's been said since time immemorial that a house always falls from within. One could understand this just by watching the humans; and now, it holds true for Forni. How regrettable..."

"Hmph, regrettable? There is no saving a fool chief who thought it wise to ally himself with the goblins, nor is there any for the fool people who chose to follow him. They are nothing but fools who've disgraced the pride of the elves. They must be defeated for the good of all elves," Fenit said passionately, slamming the table with his hand, then he stood up and called for someone.

"I will have you work, Elder Falun. You may not have long left, but you are still the chief of Gastair, one of the central players to the west!"

Fenit said in a loud voice to the man who entered the room. "We are going to war! Ready the soldiers! Let Forni know of Symphoria's might!"



When Pale heard that Fenit Symphoria was leading his army into Sinfall, she hurriedly requested an audience with him.

Pale and the soldiers under her were originally from Symphoria. Sheng and Jirad's soldiers might have been added to their numbers, but that didn't mean they could just ignore the chief.

Pale couldn't understand why Fenit was leading an attack on Sinfall. As far as she was concerned it was obviously a trap.

Unfortunately, Pale had one major weakness: she judged other people using herself as the standard. In other words, she could 'see' it was a trap; therefore, others must also see that it is a trap. So when Pale heard that Fenit was attacking, her eyes almost bulged out of their sockets, and she immediately sent a messenger to request a meeting with Fenit.

Falun Gastair had indeed surrendered, so they would be attacking Forni from both the west and the south, but... There was no reason for Fenit to attack himself.

He could just send Falun to attack Sinfall by himself. If he wasn't willing to go that far, then he probably hadn't truly surrendered.

Yet Fenit still chose to lead from the front with Falun. He even sent word to the villages, saying, "As chairman of the sage's council, I ask you to gather under me."

Regardless how little Fenit might have known about the art of war, he was still currently the most influential elf among the sylphs. The other villages would have no choice but to bow to his influence and send their soldiers. Fenit's influence was so great that it could overshadow all of his shortcomings.

The whole Symphorian army were unknowingly walking to a cliff.

As pale scooped her reflection on the waters of the bathhouse, she washed her face.

“...If Sinfall is a trap, can we stop it? Can we break through it?”

Pale repeated those words several times to herself as the worst case scenario flashed through her mind several times.

She scooped out her reflection again.

My dearest child, Pale.

When Pale heard that voice, she looked up and saw a black-feathered biting louse floating.

There is a path to survival to the west. Please don't die...

“That's!”

Pale wanted to ask something, but before she could, the biting louse vanished. Her hands that had unknowingly reached for the sky fell powerlessly back down to the waters, giving rise to many waves.

“Master Pale Symphoria! Master Fenit has responded. He will meet you at Sheng.”

“Ah, alright.”

Pale calmed down after hearing that, and after dressing herself, left the bathhouse and hurried for Sheng.

“This is dangerous...”

The first thing she noticed when they arrived at Sheng was the overly relaxed atmosphere. Everyone did as they pleased. They ate when they wanted, spent their time on whatever they wanted, and no one even bothered to tend to their weapons.

“As expected of the great chief, even his soldiers are full of confidence,” Felbi said.

“Do you really believe that?” Pale asked with a sharp glare.

“Well... I can't see it any other way.”

“Forget it. Let’s just go see Fenit.”

Pale took Felbi, who was shrugging his shoulders, to meet Fenit.

When Pale saw Fenit, she blew up. It was almost as if her calm this morning was nothing more than a lie.

“Fenit! Please stop this mad march to Sinfall now!”

“You just got here! What are you saying all of the sudden!? This is my decision as chief. Stop saying things just because of your personal feelings!”

“I am not telling you to stop out of some petty prejudice! I am telling you to stop because this is a trap! If we enter Sinfall, Forni and the goblins will attack us!”

“Show me proof then! You may be my cousin, but surely you wouldn’t actually ask me to believe you just because you said so!”

Pale was so caught up in her emotions that she could no longer see her surroundings. She closed her eyes for a moment, then looked at Fenit once more.

“Think about it...” Pale said.

“Think about it? So in other words you don’t have any evidence that it’s a trap?” Fenit said, cutting her off.

“That’s...”

“Dear cousin, if you’d open your eyes you would see that the army is already moving. There are already 600 warriors under me. If we add your soldiers as well, we will have 1000. If we attack with that much, any village would surely fall.”

Under Fenit were 200 enslaved demihumans and 400 elven warriors.

“The problem is after the village falls...” Pale said.

“You don’t need to worry about that either. After the village falls, I will promptly attack Forni and quickly put an end to this meaningless war! I know you are unskilled at war

and dislike it, so rest assured, dear cousin, that the war will end very soon.”

Indeed, if he could attack Forni immediately after Sinfall, he would be able to put a quick end to the war. Pale couldn’t help but agree there.

But would an orderless army like this truly be able to do that? Pale couldn’t answer that question.

“Is this all you came for? If so, then I’ll be going. From here on, I will be giving your orders through Commander Felbi. I still have a meeting, good day!”

“Ah, Fenit!”

Fenit’s escorts cut through between Pale and Fenit as they left.

“What now?” Felbi asked.

Pale bit her lips. “Let’s do what we can.”

At the very least, they should minimize the casualties.

“Well, that’s about all that we can really do,” Felbi said with a smile.



Hushing our breaths in the forest, we waited for night to come.

5 days ago, Symphoria’s coalition army occupied Sinfall.

Since then, they haven’t moved.

I checked which way the wind was blowing, then I turned behind me to ascertain that the goblins, the elves, and the demihumans were all ready.

The wind was blowing strongly from the south to the north.

“Let’s go,” I said.

That was all that needed to be said.

We moved through the forest, then as I raised Flamberge up, our attack on Sinfall began.

The Symphoria patrols were quietly taken out by Gi Ji Arsil and his band of scout elves.

The big villages among the elves were: Forni, Symphoria, Sheng, Gastair, Jirad, and Sinfall. The moment the war began, these villages quickly solidified their defenses.

They built a gate to block the road, created fences out of plants and thorny vines that grew quickly, placing them around the residential district, then they placed enough trees around to ensure that there wasn't even a tiny gap. In this way, they created something akin to castle walls.

The elves were children of the wind and water, who have received the protection of the forest, and were blessed with the ability to manipulate plants. This is something I only heard from Shure as the war progressed, but it was precisely because of this that we goblins could move through this sea of forest that seemed impossible for our kind.

The elves constructed their facilities by making the plants move. Bigger facilities were built by having hundreds of elves move giant trees. After which, they then adjust the branches and use the trees as living walls.

Of course, the ability to manipulate plants was different from person to person. Being able to do something better as a group was a given, but there were some individuals who possessed similar powers despite being alone. That sort of thing is a kind of trait of this world.

The living tree gate was shut tightly.

We only moved far enough that we could see it, then we hushed our breathing again.

"It's almost time..."

Soon the red moon of the older goddess, Ervi, will become a full moon, and the moon of the younger goddess, Navi, will become a half-moon. The winds of the moonlight goddess, Veedena, will lose its strength, and the darkness of the night god, Ya Jansu, will descend.

We waited for the signal.



Occupying Sinfall was so easy it was anticlimactic.

The only ones to surrender were the werewolves and the non-combatant elven citizens. Fenit was quite tolerant of them.

To the elves, who numbered 1000 men strong, victory was within grasp.

“I am Mido of the Fang Tribe. I thank you for accepting our surrender.”

Mido had to be carried out by his comrades because of the wounds he had incurred.

The ones to receive him were Felbi and Pale.

Mido ordered Pale to do this and that for him, and she wordlessly obeyed without a word of complaint.

Felbi wasn't happy, but he didn't voice out a word of complaint.

“Are those wounds from fighting?”

“No, unfortunately. I got it from that goblin bastard. I can't believe how foolish I am to have actually considered forming an alliance with him,” said Mido with his head bowed down.

His body was covered in whip marks all over from head to toe.

“How cruel...” Felbi said.

Pale nodded. “Please rest assured, we have no intentions of hurting you.”

“I'm grateful, but...” Mido frowned. “We have lived our lives as warriors. At least that was the case for us under the Forni. Yet it seems we are treated as slaves in your forests?”

“That's...”

Pale didn't know what to say, so Felbi answered in her place.

"They have their own way of living. I hear they became slaves in the past, but I don't know the details. If you're interested, you should ask them."

Felbi patted Pale's shoulder, imploring her to go.

"Yes, in any case, we have to go now. Let's talk more tomorrow," Pale said.

Mido quietly watched the two's back as they left.

The next day, Pale noticed that the demihumans who surrendered talked to the enslaved demihumans, but she couldn't spare any thoughts for them.

The only thing in her mind now was that they needed to attack Forni as soon as possible.

She needed to convince Fenit, but how? They still needed to do something about the Forni-Goblin Army's impending attack too.

On the fifth day after taking over Sinfall, an ominous feeling struck Pale, waking her up in the dead of the night. During this time, the wind blew fiercely, almost as if it were warning them.

"Why am I so rattled? Something doesn't feel right..."

Pale left her bedchamber with her short sword and bow.

"God of Wind, Castor, and Goddess of Water, Iren, please guide your children. God of Forests, Chenzhen, please bless us with your divine protection," Pale prayed.

Pale walked through the black of the night, patrolling the surrounding area.

The soldiers of Symphoria were all drunk. They must have been feasting today too. Pale couldn't help but sigh at their sorry appearance. In the end, she wasn't able to convince Fenit to attack Forni.

After securing victory so easily, the soldiers of Symphoria and the other villages

completely looked down on the enemy. They started thinking they could win this war without any more sacrifices.

Pale walked toward her own platoon.

“Yo, what’s up, Pale?”

Felbi was at the southern gate leading to Sheng, drinking by himself. When Pale saw that, she sighed.

“I couldn’t sleep... I’m not so sure about drinking liquor in the dead of the night, though.”

“Hmph, it’s fine. There’s no enemy here. There won’t be any even if I get drunk. If you want we can exchange pointers in archery.”

“I know you’re used to drinking.”

Realizing that there wouldn’t be any end to arguing, Felbi frowned and turned to Pale. “What? Are you worrying about that again?”

“...Yeah.”

“You’re such a worrywart. I like that about you, but... Huh? What is that?”

Felbi squinted his eyes at the distant fire, while Pale turned.

“The banquet should have already ended,” Felbi said.

“True, I wonder what that is? An accidental fire, perhaps? That direction is where the slave demihumans are,” Pale said.

The ominous feeling within Pale only grew stronger.

—256 days until the war with the humans.

INTERMISSION

ANCIENT HERO

Status	
Name	Mido
Race	Werewolf
Level	95
Class	Warrior
Possessed Skills	The Right Hand of Tyranny
Divine Protection	Wind God
Attributes	Wind

Carad was a demihuman born a slave. His father and his mother were both slave demihumans, though their brown fur was greatly praised within the Fang Tribe.

Carad was born a slave and grew up a slave, just like his mother and father who lived a life of slavery and eventually died a slave.

"Our ancestors once ran freely through the vast plains."

He still remembered the gentle voice of his mother.

"So why are we here? In a place like this?"

Life as a slave was horrible. They were forced to live in small rooms and were even forbidden from going out. They couldn't even eat their fill.

One day, when the elven children made him cry, he asked his mother that question.

"...Well, once upon a time, we suddenly found ourselves in the middle of a war, then before we knew it, we ended up here."

When Carad saw his mother's lonely face, he couldn't find it in him to ask any more.

But he knew that they were slaves without any rights, neither the right to live nor the right to die.

Eventually, his parents died, and some decades later, he suddenly found himself a part of a slave platoon headed to Sinfall.

“Yo, brother,” a voice called out to him.

“You again,” Carad said.

In front of Carad was a Fang Tribe youngster from another village.

“Don’t be so cold,” the youngster said.

“I don’t have any business with you,” Carad said.

“But I do. Brother, won’t you come with us? We’ll happily receive you.”

This man has been pestering him since yesterday, asking him to come to their village.

There they could hunt as they please, fight as they please, and raise a family as they pleased.

“...Retreat is death. Every slave knows that,” Carad said.

His nearby comrades who were like him all had resigned eyes. Slaves were usually killed whenever they ran to set an example.

“I don’t know what happened to you in the past, but this is an opportunity. In order to be like our ancestors we’re going to —Hey! Where are you going?”

“Sorry, but I want to work on my weapon. I want to increase my odds of surviving even a little.”

“Not like you can call your current life ‘living.’”

Carat angrily turned back to the young man. “Even so, I don’t want to die. That’s why we...”

The man frowned. "There's still tomorrow. I hope you can give me a good answer then."

"I'm telling you, I—"

"I'll wait for you, brother."

The youngster turned around and walked away. On his back could be seen countless wounds, some still fresh.

"He's a slave too, isn't he? Why is he so persistent?" Carat muttered.

When he came back to his comrades, he started working on his rusted iron equipment. The leather armor they had were desperately made by the women even though they might never come home. Their armor was far inferior compared to the blue-silver steel the elves wore.

Every day was just another struggle with death.

Despite that he wanted to meet his wife. Though few, he wanted to protect the people he loved. That was the one thing that kept Carad 'alive', and he didn't have the courage to sever it.

"Hey, that guy just now..." A demihuman said.

Aside from doing maintenance on their equipment there wasn't much to do. The whole Symphoria army had become relaxed since they conquered Sinfall, but the werewolves held their breath and waited in the sidelines for the next battle as they always did.

"He went back," Carad said, though he seemed to be brooding.

"What? Did something happen?" The demihuman asked.

"I was just wondering... What is it like to be free?" Carad said.

—Freedom.

Carad tried not to think about it, but when there was nothing to do, he couldn't help

but think of it.

“You’ll be able to eat as much meat as you want, I guess?” A demihuman replied.

“Stupid, you think you can hunt with your skills?” Carad bantered.

They talked idly among themselves, but in the end, someone sighed and said, “It probably feels like the hero, Harid, did.”

The hero, Harid.

That was the name of the hero werewolf who stood against the humans when they were being chased through the plains. Carad always enjoyed hearing bedtime stories of his tales from his mother.

He dreamt of becoming like him one day.

He never stopped dreaming even when he was bullied by the elven children, but somewhere someday, he started thinking it was impossible for him to become that hero.

“The hero, Harid, huh?”

Since when did he...



The next day, that man came again. His proposition hadn’t changed, but Carad suddenly thought of asking him something.

“Hey, do you know the story of the hero, Harid?” Carad asked.

“Hah? Well, yeah, I’m pretty sure,” the youngster demihuman replied.

As the story goes...

The Fang Tribe was living peacefully in the plains, but then the humans suddenly attacked.

Merchants they once traded with.

Hunters who helped them before.

Villages they'd never seen before.

All sorts of humans suddenly pointed their blades at them and hunted their kind. The werewolves had their hands full just running away.

In the end, they were driven to a corner, but just when they thought it was over, a hero appeared.

A young man by the name of Harid, who ran through the woods with his giant gray wolf friends.

With the strength to tear through even armor of iron and a fur impervious even to fire, Harid led his tribe and fought against the humans for the sake of his brethren.

But Harid wasn't just brawns, he was smart too.

He had friends among the humans and knew their strength. He knew full well that if he fought them he would surely die.

Yet despite knowing that he fought against them.

After seven days and seven nights of fighting, Harid managed to drive the humans to the other side of the plains. He had successfully brought peace to the Fang Tribe, but the fierce battle left him critically wounded. In his last moments, he told his brethren to run to the forest, then he passed on to paradise.

There he lies, recovering from his wounds, and one day, when his brethren are in danger, he will rise from his sleep and save them.

After that the Fang Tribe ran to the forest and sought refuge from the elves.

"He sacrificed himself to save others. In the end, he was named a hero, to be praised for all time," Carat said to the youngster demihuman after telling Harid's story. "What do you think Harid would think if he saw us today?"

“...I’m sure not even he would believe that the elves could become so rotten.”

Carad’s eyes opened wide when he heard the demihuman’s response. “Became rotten? But they were always like this.”

The demihuman shook his head. “Where we live, they mostly leave us alone except for a visit once every few years.”

“No way...”

Carad couldn’t believe his ears. If this demihuman’s words were to be believed, the elves weren’t particularly bad, it was just the Jirad.

Carad drooped his ears, while the man before him narrowed his eyes. An odd seemingly apologetic atmosphere appeared between them.

What’s going on? Carad wondered.

The demihuman didn’t speak. He just quietly stood there.

“...Why did Harid fight, I wonder. Even though he knew he could die... Didn’t he fear death?”

When Carad finally spoke, those were the words that came out.

“Who knows?” The demihuman said. “He was a chieftain, so he must’ve had a strong sense of duty. That’s probably it.”

Then as if he was talking about an old friend, Carad said, “It was as if—”

But then a voice yelled.

“Hey, what are you doing!?” An elf yelled, cutting their conversation short.

“Not good, I have to go!” Carad said.

But when he tried to go back, the youngster demihuman with him pulled his arm.

“Brother, come here this evening. Let’s continue this talk.”

“Now’s not the time for—”

“Come! You must definitely come!”

Then the man turned, and he vanished like the wind.



Tonight would be the fifth night since they’ve occupied Sinfall.

Strong winds blew from the south to the north, making a groaning sound that shook one’s ears.

During the night the slaves were chained and gathered in one spot. Carad’s eyes darted to and fro, but he couldn’t search for the man he met this afternoon.

The elves had been partying again, but now, it was so quiet only the winds made noise.

Carad’s ears stood as he focused his hearing.

For some reason, he felt uneasy.

He kept thinking back to that man’s expression.

Unfortunately, he couldn’t move. If he were to move even a little, the chains attached to his neck would rustle.

From the start, he knew he wouldn’t be able to meet him.

Carad closed his eyes and forced himself to sleep. It would be foolish to tire himself before the war began.

When sleep took him, he saw the hero, Harid.

Of course, he’d never actually seen the man before, but he had come up with his own image within his mind.

When he saw his face, he suddenly found himself unhappy.

“Why?”

In his dream, he struggled to speak, but when he finally managed to, what came out was a question.

“Why are we in a place like this?”

The hero fought the humans. That’s praiseworthy. But in the end, his decision led to them being enslaved. He couldn’t even use his life the way he wished.

—*“Not like you can call your current life ‘living.’”*

Whose words were those?

Right. It’s not your fault that we’re here.

But still... Why are you sleeping so peacefully?

If you’re a hero, then save us!

“—, *HUFF.”

Suddenly, Carad opened his eyes.

A bad dream, Carad thought.

A grim reminder for a dream; of course, it was bad.

It was cold. Apparently, his back had drawn cold sweat.

Then a voice called out to him.

“So this is where you were,” it said.

Still half asleep, Carad mistook the figure before him for the hero in his dreams, and the words it spoke were like a saving hand to him from the sorrow he felt in his dream.

Carad blinked his eyes a few times then looked up that figure.

—Alone, dressed in armor, and covered in blood... the hero stands before me.

“Ha...rid?”

After blinking a few times, it finally dawned on him that this was the man that spoke to him this afternoon.

“Oh... It’s you.”

Carad tried to talk as he usually did.

He thought he was hallucinating, but the smell of blood was real.

That ferociously exhaling breath coupled with that sharp gaze that reminded one he was a warrior.

“Are you hurt?” Carad asked as he stood up, causing the chains to rustle.

At that, the sleeping brethren around them began to wake.

“I came to pick you up, brother.”

His low-pitched voice resounded with the wind, making it hard to hear.

Carad saw a light from behind the demihuman. Was that a torch?

The other demihumans quietly watched Carad and this demihuman’s exchange as they woke.

Carad blinked his eyes again as the demihuman folded his arms and spoke in a loud voice. “The hero, Harid, fought the humans until the end of his life! After he fought for seven days and seven nights, he spent every last breath in his children’s arms guiding our kind!”

Carad, who had long stopped thinking, saw the figure of that great hero flash through his mind. The other members of the Fang Tribe were the same. As he and his brethren started to get noisy, the man before them spoke again.

“The hero, Harid, said he couldn’t peacefully pass unless our tribe fulfilled one wish. He said that if our brothers were to fall later, it would be our responsibility!”

At the man’s words, emotions rose within Carad’s chest. Fearless Fang Tribe members carrying torches gathered around from behind the demihuman.

“Save them, he said! Only then would he be able to pass peacefully. Save them! He demanded, tears of blood streaming down his eyes as he desperately tried to reach out with his hands and ground his teeth! Then he died!”

Save them! Save me! How long had Carad said those words?

Whether it was in their hearts, or on the brink of death, or in their daily lives... The demihumans of Jirad never stopped saying those words.

“Descendant of the ferocious crystal, a member of the Fang Tribe (Werewolf), I am the Tyrant, Mido!”

As the light from the torches touched the werewolves, their spirits rose.

In the dark of the night, those plains Carad once dreamt of appeared, and the man before him –No, the hero, Harid, howled out these words: “I’ve come to save you, brothers!”

Mido howled as his emotions flowed out of him.

“Brethren of the south, forgive our delay! But tonight! We shall at long last restore your glory. The hero, Harid’s, dying wish shall today be fulfilled!”

There wasn’t a werewolf who did not shed a tear at those words.

“Break free from your chains and stand, brethren!!”

The hero had at long last come to save them.

“With these hands, let us take back our freedom!”

That night, the 200 slave demihumans of the elves switched sides to the Forni-Goblin Coalition.



level has risen.

Gi Do's level has risen.

81 => 89

Gi Za Zakuend's level has risen.

56 => 61

Gi Ji Arsil's level has risen.

14 => 21

Gi Ba's level has risen.

24 => 53

Gi Jii Yubu's level has risen.

1 => 5

Gi Ah's level has risen.

1 => 10

Gi Ii's level has risen.

1 => 6

Gi Uu's level has risen.

1 => 13

Hal's level has risen.

86 => 95.

Mido's level has risen.

95 => 97

GOBLIN NAME CHEAT SHEET

[Goblin] Gi Ga

The goblin in that estranged group that was with the protagonist when he defeated an orc. He is currently a noble class, the highest amongst the protagonist's subordinates. He prefers to use the spear.

[Goblin] Gi Gu

The former leader of the village. He was pressured by the protagonist in his goblin noble form, and was added to his subordinates. He uses the long sword, and is relatively smart for a goblin rare. Became a goblin noble in chapter 39.

[Goblin] Gi Gi

Known as a beast warrior, a goblin with the ability to tame beasts. He evolved while hunting spear deer with the protagonist. He prefers to use the axe. His goblin class is rare.

[Goblin] Gi Go

A goblin with many wounds on his body. The food of his horde was stolen by the gray wolves, so he made a decision to follow the protagonist. He is the most experienced amongst the goblin rares. His weapon is a curved katana. He acts like a samurai.

Recently became a noble, and received the divine protection of the Sword God, Ra Baruza.

[Goblin] Gi Za

The druid goblin rare that recently joined them.

[Goblin] Gi Ji

A goblin rare. He evolved in chapter 37 after hunting with Gi Ga. He has the <> skill which makes him great for scouting.

[Goblin] Gi Do

Druid. Uses wind magic.

[Goblin] Gi Jii

Goblin Rare. From Gi Gu's Faction. He is known for his <> which allows him to see his

opponent's weakness.

[Goblin] Gi Da

Goblin Rare. From Gi Ga's faction. Notable skills are <> and <>.

[Goblin] Gi Zu.

Goblin Rare. The goblin favored by the Mad God (Zu Oru). Has the <> skill.

[Goblin] Gi Zo

Druid. Water magician.

[Goblin] Gi De

Beast tamer.

[Goblin] Aluhaliha

Leader of Paradua, one of the four goblin tribes and are known for their use of rider-beasts, which are essentially giant tigers.

[Goblin] Rashka

Leader of Gaidga, one of the four goblin tribes and are known for their valor and brutish strength.

[Goblin] Gilmi

Receiver of the title, The First Archer. He is the second in command in Ganra, one of the four tribes known for their rare ability amongst goblins to use bows.

[Goblin] Narsa

The Princess of Ganra. She is the only female goblin rare introduced so far.

[Goblin] Yellow

From Gordob tribe. He is the father of their priestess.

Other Characters

Humans

Reshia Fel Zeal (17 years-old)

The priestess known as the saint. As the Healing Goddess' follower, she lives to spread

the word and teach righteousness. She has the divine protection of the goddess, and can heal others.

Lili (21 years-old)

She studied the famous sword style, Zweil Style, in the capital. She has sworn fealty to Reshia. And while she may have lost to the protagonist in one hit, she has proven herself strong enough to easily defeat three normal goblins.

Mattis (26 years-old)

The second son of a farmer. He's largely responsible for drying the meat to preserve them.

Chinos (24 years-old)

The third son of a farmer. He plows the fields and is close to Mattis.

Keifel (28 years-old)

An adventurer who took on a request to escort Reshia through the Forest of Darkness. He's strong enough that he could easily wield a steel great sword, but the protagonist still managed to kill him.

Zeon (32 years-old)

A follower of Ativ. He specializes in fire magic. In his battle against the protagonist, he used his fire magic, but still lost. In the end, he tried to blow himself up along with the protagonist, but the protagonist's words agitated him, causing him to lose the opportunity.

Tinra (23 years-old)

A villager. She is one of the women used by the goblins as a breeding machine that the protagonist killed.

Ashtal Do Germion (59 years-old)

The king that rules the western region of the continent in which the Forest of Darkness and the connecting borders are included. He is a powerful ruler with seven holy knights under him. He has recently ordered three of those holy knights to search for the saint.

Gowen Ranid (45 years-old)

The feudal lord that rules over the region next to the Forest of Darkness. As one of the country's strongest powers, he is renowned as the Iron-Armed Knight. He is currently

leading his soldiers in a quest to find the saint.

Gulland Rifenin (31 years-old)

A former adventurer. As one of the country's strongest powers, he is renowned as the Storm Knight. He'd been stationed in the northern mountains, but the king called him back to send him off in a quest for the saint.

Gene Marlon (24 years-old)

As one of the country's strongest powers, he is renowned as Lightning-Fast Knight. He was previously stationed at the south, but the king called him back to send him on a quest to search for the saint. Killing is his favorite past-time. Whether it's a man, a demihuman or a monster, they're all just pieces of meat to be cut down before him.

Herculean Wyatt (40 years-old)

A member of the Blood Oath of the Flying Swallow. He specializes in handling great shields. He has a gentle personality, but beware for his anger isn't one to be taken lightly.

Mage Killer Mill (19 years-old)

A member of the Blood Oath of the Flying Swallow. She is an assassin that favors the use of talons. Renowned as the mage killer, she is a mage's worst nightmare.

Wand of Destruction Bellan (37 years-old)

A member of the Blood Oath of the Flying Swallow. He wields a fire staff. As a former knight, he cares a great deal about honor.

Hawk-Eyed Fick (31 years-old)

An adventurer with two names. He has exceptional perception and skill. He is currently searching through the Forest of Darkness under Gulland's lead.

The White Hand of Life (Previously translated as divine hands) (Age Unknown)

A priest robed in white. She specializes in healing and support. Her age, name, and origin are all unknown.

Vitz (25 years-old)

A talkative sword-wielding adventurer. He's actual strength isn't bad, but he's still far from being deserving of a second name.

Yugil (26 years-old)

An adventurer and an unwilling shield bearer. He might appear old, but he is actually still young.

Yoshu (26 years-old)

The younger brother of the slaves Gene purchased. The collar of obedience around his neck keeps him from going against Gene's orders. Healers are rare, so he's been made into a shield bearer.

Shumea (28 years-old)

The older sister of the slaves Gene purchased. The collar of obedience around her neck keeps her from going against Gene's orders. Contrast to her brother who bears a shield, she uses a spear.

Household of the Gods

Altesia.

The Goddess of the Underworld and the Goddess of Valor. As the goddess the snakes serve, she has given her blessing to the protagonist. She is a dangerous woman with her deep jealousy and fierce temperament.

Zenobia

The Goddess of Healing. She has given her blessing to Reshia. She has also warned the protagonist to protect her. Altesia might hate her, but she doesn't feel the same way toward Altesia.

Pitch Black (Verid)

A one-eyed red-eyed snake that belongs to the Goddess of the Underworld.

Twin-Headed Snake

Known to the goblins as the Lord of Decay. He is one of the snakes that fought the world with the Goddess of the Underworld.

Others

Selena

The elven woman Gene purchased. She became a slave after running away from her tribe.

Hasu

A high kobold. She is one of the protagonist's pets.

The protagonist managed to tame her by giving her orc corps and other meat as bait. She is a fortuitous kobold who somehow managed to become the leader of her pack.

Cynthia

As the pup of the gray wolves, she has been given the elven name that means lady of the lake. Reshia, Lili, and other children and women are quite taken by her lovely fur.

Gastra

As the pup of the gray wolves, he has been given the name of a wise human monarch that means sovereign of the wind's howls. His uninhibited personality leads him to battle Hasu for ranks on a daily basis.

Bui

A timid orc. Gol Gol had taken a liking for him despite his small body. After Gol Gol died, he led the orcs to the west, but the protagonist managed to capture them.

Gol Gol

The orc king that attacked the village. He is a berserker who can use skills. He was defeated by the protagonist.

CHAPTER 136

SYLPH UNIFICATION WAR XI

Living trees opened the northern gate from inside, revealing the crimson bloom of the red burning flames within. A smile surfaced on my lips, but the cruel thoughts that lingered within my mind, made that smile come out cold and cruel.

“The demihumans are allies! Those who surrender, capture them! Those who fight, end them! Go!” I led the horde through the gates while I swung Flamberge from my shoulders.

“Don’t let the goblins leave you behind! Onwards!” The araneae, Nikea, said from the darkness.

Fire spread to the trees, dyeing the elven village in the red hue of the flames. It seemed it wouldn’t be long before the flames burned everything.

“At this rate, the village will...” Some elves spoke among themselves anxiously.

Unfortunately, we don’t have the leisure to hold back. The enemy forces are at least twice as big ours. On top of that, they’re outfitted with superior equipment. We have to fight like this if we are to win.

“Defeat the enemy quickly, then extinguish the flames. If you’re worried about the village, then defeat the enemy first!” Fei told the anxious elves.

His words were reckless, but they were agreeable words.

If we don’t defeat the enemy here, setting the village on fire would have been for naught.

“Let us settle things here once and for all!” Fei said.

With that his men finally showed some resolve.

As the elves picked up their bow and sword, I ran after Fei and ran alongside him.

I thank him for getting the elves in order, but he shook his head and said, "It wasn't for your sake. Someone had to tell them, and we couldn't possibly push that onto Master Shure."

He nocked an arrow as he ran, barely stopping even as he shot it toward the elves.

A worrywart for his master, huh.

"WooOON!" Cynthia, a daughter of the fang tribe despite being born away from it, led the pack of gray wolves to the south ahead of us. Behind her were the giant gray wolves as they made their way for the Fang Tribe.

"Gi Jii Yubu! Move your forces from the north to the west! Limit the enemy's escape route!" I commanded.

"As you command!" He responded.

The battle demon, Gi Jii Yubu. He has grown enough that I can now feel at ease leaving one side of the army to him. The newly evolved rare goblins, Gi Ah (One Who Encroaches into the Divine Region), Gi Ii (Explorer), and the Ferocious Gi Ba are with him as his assistants.

"Gi Ji Arsil! Move your forces to the east and stop the enemy at the south! Don't get caught in the fire!" I commanded.

"As you will!" He responded.

Ru Rou and Hal from the tribes are with Gi Ji Arsil. The araneae chieftain, Nikea, is with him as well.

I'm a little worried, but he should have more than enough firepower to take down some panicking elves.

"Rashka, Fei, Gi Za Zakuend! Lead your forces and follow me! We're going south!"

"My fists will make songs out of their skulls!" Rashka said.

"Very well!" Fei said.

“Exactly as I was hoping for!” Gi Za Zakuend said.

Like that we followed after Cynthia.

Our army consisted of elves, normal goblins, and even druids, which the shaman, Gi Za Zakuend, led. The wind magician, Gi Do, and the water magician, Gi U, are under him well.

Rashka is following me because I couldn’t think of anyone else he’d be willing to follow. As a member of Gaidga and their chief, his power as a duke class is something to fear.

Gi Jii has just recently become a noble and Gi Ji has only started to get his feet into commandship, so since I couldn’t leave Rashka with anyone, I decided to just take him with me instead.

As I ran while giving commands, Shumea ran up to me.

“Boss, let me go too!” She said.

The distant fire illuminated Selena’s face, who was behind her.

“Sure, I don’t mind. Though it sure is rare to hear something like that from you,” I said.

She wasn’t the type to seek battles out on her own.

—Oh I see... It must be because of that person Selena is looking for.

“Don’t worry, we just have some errand to take care of!” Shumea said as she took Selena with her and left, spear in hand.

She could have asked for my help, and yet she didn’t. She probably considers it something personal.

But I did promise to help...

“Fei, can you send someone to go with them?” I asked.

“Would 5 be enough?” Fei asked.

“Yes!”

At Fei’s behest, 5 elves followed after the two girls. I couldn’t send goblins, as they might end up causing needless battles.

I thought the strong winds would blow the fire, spreading it even more, but it seems the roads and the wide plazas in the village have kept them from spreading.

Well, that’s alright. We have more than enough chaos.

“To victory! Onwards!!”

I led my army to meet up with Mido in the south.



Fires rarely broke out in elven villages. One reason was because they hadn’t fought wars in a very long time, and another reason was because of the forests’ barriers. Besides, how could fire be likely to occur in the elven villages, which were blessed by the wind and water gods themselves?

But unfortunately for the elves, their unrest had changed the barrier.

That was especially true for Sinfall, where the elves had built gates and walls with living trees to make a fortress of sort. Of course, the alterations made wasn’t enough to affect the barrier spanning the whole forest, but it did affect the arrangement of the giant trees. And that was enough to alter the blessings of the wind and water gods. Like that, the elven villages, once impervious to fire, became fuel for the red blooming flower that was fire.

Fortunately, they had a central plaza, which separated the southern and northern districts, keeping the flames from spreading too quickly. But to the elves who weren’t used to fires, that was irrelevant.

When the elves saw the billowing smoke and the red burning flames, many of them chose to flee. Those who couldn’t fight fled to the north, while the warriors, despite being intoxicated, moved about haphazardly as they looked for their platoons.

Of those elves, the ones who fled to the north faster than the others ended up clashing with Gi Ji Arsil's forces. With the fire yet distant, the ones who ruled the darkness and fought ferociously were Nikea and her araneae.

By grinding a subspecies of glowing moss, and then using that as medicine, the araneae were able to see despite the darkness and were able to put up threads around the area, allowing them to intercept the fleeing elves.

"A mere swing of our blades will not suffice to thank the Forni elves for all that they've done!" Nikea said.

At that, the araneae used the threads they'd set up to run the village's outer walls, raining attacks on the unsuspecting elves from above. In no time at all, the fleeing elves were subjugated.

The elves had run as fast as they could, not even bothering to take any belongings with them. Because of that most of them didn't even have any armor. Their bows were all that they had.

With their sharp claws and their nimble bodies, the araneae made short work of the elves. Yet even scarier than the cluster of araneae was Nikea, what with her claws dripping with poison and her threads that entangled the elves.

The araneae weren't the only ones attacking the elves, however. While the araneae were attacking the elves, Gi Ji Arsil and his goblins aimed for the elves' throats from the darkness.

After failing to infiltrate the human fortress and meeting the orcs, Gi Ji learned the importance of number. And so, after returning to the Fortress of the Abyss, he requested for normal goblins to be given to him.

He trained those goblins during their march here, and somehow he managed to make it in time. This war would be their first battle. Lurking in the darkness, they jumped for the throat of the weakest looking prey from the flock.

Gi Ji and his group of specially trained goblins used their short swords to attack the elves from the shadows. They picked them off one after another, leaving the panicking elves as helpless as sleeping kittens. The resulting mental strain from fighting an opponent one couldn't see was even greater than the actual damage dealt by Gi Ji and

his gobs.

“Surrender! Or else you shall all die!” Hal declared on rider-beast-back as he led the Paradua goblins.

“Show the chief our strength! Onwards!” Dashka said as he led the goblins. Rashka’s participation in the battle had greatly roused his spirit.

“Don’t hit your allies! Remember, we have our own battle!” The young Ru Rou of Ganra said as he led the lone archer unit of the goblins.

Like that Gi Ji Arsil’s battle at the east gradually moved down to the south.

At the same time, the elves to the west were also being pushed back by Gi Jii Yubu.

“Gi Ba, take 8 groups of goblins to the front, and stop the enemy! Gi Ii, take 10 groups with you and take a detour from the right. Gi Ba, take the enemy head on!”

Gi Jii Yubu gave precise instructions as he led the rare class goblins.

“Boss, enemy, many coming,” Gi Ah reported after returning from his scout.

“So the main force is coming here? It seems we will be getting the tastiest part.”

Closing his eyes for a bit, Gi Jii thought of the terrain and their forces, then he struck his iron spear into the ground.

“At the behest of our lord, we shall drive the enemy to the south! Gi Ah, speed up the extermination of the enemy. Take 12 groups with you and attack the enemy Gi Ba is fighting with from the flanks!”

“Understood!”

As Gi Ah set off, Gi Jii set off as well.

“Pale Symphoria, was it? I think it’s about time I paid you back for all those defeats.”

As Gi Jii looked toward the south, he said those words. With resolve, he went down further south.



The elves running up ahead froze the moment they saw us. Some carried a babe in hand, others were unarmored women, some were elderly. Apparently, most of the noncombatants were fleeing through the north.

There were so many of them I didn't know what to do.

"...Fei, can the elves take care of these people?" I asked.

"Of course!" He replied.

The gray wolves running up ahead under Cynthia's lead cut a path through the elven crowd. We had to hurry, lest we wished to find ourselves drowned in this sea of refugees.

The elves probably won't follow goblin leadership, but if it's their fellow elves ruling – even if they are their enemies – they should be more compliant.

"Open a path! Don't block our way!" I commanded.

When the elves heard that, they split into two groups, opening up the middle.

"Thank you, King of Goblins," Fei said.

I looked at him oddly, not sure why he was being thankful.

Sensing that, he continued. "Though they come from different villages, they are still our brethren. We are much obliged that you have chosen not to harm them."

"You don't need to thank me. All I seek is victory, so don't go start seeing me in some strange light."

I have no intentions of massacring the elves.

Besides, I actually want to fight with them as allies one day. Needless slaughter is best avoided.

Fei chuckled a bit when I said that, then we continued on our way.

Gradually, we neared the distant torchlight. As we did, more and more burning trees came to view. The wind that blew was already warm. Fortunately, the smoke billowed up above our heads.

The sooner this battle ends the better.

“Mido! Where are you!?” I called out as I searched for the leading actor of this battle under the crimson sky.

It was then that elven warriors stood before me.

There were about 50 of them.

“Surrender! Or die!”

As I said that, I filled my legs with ether and swung Flamberge. With a single stroke, the enemies outfitted in srilana equipment flew to the sky.

“We’re under attack! Enemies are coming from–”

I ran with the black smoke as cover, then I swung Flamberge – and with its great weight – cut down the screaming elf.

When I neared the elves, they looked blankly at me.

I warned you!

“Turn me ^{Enchant} into a blade!”

Ether coursed through the blade of Flamberge, giving rise to sonorous black flames.

First stroke.

In an instant, the black burning great sword cut the elves in half.

Second stroke.

Then in the next moment, it claimed their necks.

It didn't matter how thick their armor were. Before Flamberge, they might as well wear leaves.

"GURUUuUoOoOAaOAaA!"

At the bellowing of the World-Devouring Howl, the elves cowered. I leaped for the elves, sword in hand, and though they tried to defend, Flamberge mercilessly took their lives.

I ran through the now open path.

"Follow the king!"

After I broke through the elves, the army behind me followed. There was no rest for the elven soldiers. In fact, it only got worse. For the shaman, Gi Za Zakuend, followed after me and used his magic to summon blades of wind, ripping the elves into shreds as the druids under Gi Za's lead casted their own spells.

Srilana armor might have the ability to disperse ether, but that also has its limits. Once that limit was crossed, the srilana armor will no longer be able to protect its wearer. The elves cowered before the might of the druids.

Slash
"My fury howls!"

Then Rashka came along and sent the elves flying with his burly arms. Like a one-eyed fiend, he swung his club and wreaked havoc on the elves, stirring up a bath of blood and flesh.

"We will expand the opening the Goblin King has made. Three parallel shots! Fire!"

At Fei's command, the few elves under him shot their arrows toward the enemy elves.

"WoOn!"

I looked up when I heard Cynthia's cries.

“Mido! Are you alright!?” I asked.

As the light of the fire touched Mido’s body, it revealed his bloodied figure.

“Ah, ahh... If it isn’t the Goblin King! How about it? Wasn’t the result great?” He said.

“Indeed. With this, victory is ours. The only question now is how much further we’ll be able to push this advantage.”

“Today shall be a day of reckoning. Those who’ve sullied their hands with the blood of my brethren will pay!”

“WooOON!” Cynthia barked.

“Y-Young lady! You actually came!”

One moment, Mido’s face was like that of a devil’s, then in the next moment, his face was like that of an excited little boy.

It didn’t last long, however, as he quickly assumed that scary face again.

We were still in the middle of a battle.

Once, the gray wolves Cynthia led meets up with the Fang Tribe, we will be changing our attack patterns.

Gi Ji and Gi Jii are fighting at northeast and northwest respectively. Their battles should be progressing downwards. Naturally, that means the enemy will have to respond accordingly, or they could get caught in the smoke and head north.

We came here to the south to meet up with Mido, but more than that, our real objective was to hit the enemy from behind.

East or west? Which one should we attack from both sides first?

—East, huh.

*THUMP THUMP. For a moment, Verid throbbed.

My warrior's instincts are telling me to go east, but in any case, the only difference is which one we get to first.

"Eliminate the enemy to the east. Follow!"



The whole village went into an uproar as it caught fire.

"By the gods... They're willing to go this far?" Felbi muttered in disbelief.

Pale agreed with him though she didn't bother to voice it out.

The distant fire seemed like it would cover the whole village in the blink of an eye.

Pale's face was as cold as ice, but inside, her brain was running as fast as it could to devise a plan. The fire they were seeing was coming from the south.

Pale might have experienced a fire or two herself, but most elves hadn't. They looked on blankly at the scene before them.

"The village is burning..." They muttered.

Pale had overcome many fires with her adventurer friends in the human world before.

She spoke firmly to stifle the unrest she was feeling. "We can still make it!"

"But the village is..." The elves argued.

"That fire won't go beyond the south. Remember! What is the geography of the village? There are roads and a plaza in the center, right? The fire from the southern side won't be able to cross those. The northern side should be safe."

Pale's words managed to persuade the elves.

"However, this fire was probably started by someone. We have to make a decision, Felbi," Pale said.

"W-What?" Felbi asked.

“Are we going to fight? Or are we going to flee? Make a decision.”

Pale’s gaze shot through Felbi. Pale was feeling partly responsible due to her failure to predict this sort of counterattack. In the end, however, the commander was Felbi. He had to be the one to make the decision.

Pale could only watch intently at the male elf commander as she awaited his orders.

The initiative has already been taken by the enemy. Be it momentum or position, the enemy is superior in all fronts.

But they haven’t lost yet.

A fire burned within Pale, though at the same time, reason told her they should flee. That wasn’t a wrong choice, but they could still fight.

Without the chiefs pulling her around, she would be able to fight as she pleased. Of course, they would be fewer than the enemy at the start, but if they could confine the enemy within Sinfall, they might eventually be able to turn the board against them.

Pale refused that tempting voice that sought to convince her to fight. The one calling the shots wasn’t her but Felbi. That was her excuse, at least.

“...Do you think the chiefs have fled already?” Felbi asked.

“With this fire they’re probably still in the process of—” Pale responded, but Felbi spoke again before she could finish.

“In that case, we fight!” He said.

When Felbi said that, Pale closed her eyes for a moment.

This battle was their loss, but she had a duty to make mitigate their losses as much as possible.

“There will be many casualties,” Pale said.

“I know,” Felbi nodded.

Pale began organizing the soldiers. "First Platoon to Sixth Platoon, equip yourselves with swords! Seventh and Eighth, bring your bows! The first and second platoon are to bring their armor as well! Soldiers who can use water magic are to report to me! You will be the keys to our victory."

Their formation this time around was much more melee-oriented compared to normal.

"May we all live through this. The blessings of Chenzhen (Forest God) to all!"

The soldiers spoke after her.

"With Za Ruga (God of Bows) !"

"Glory to Iren (Water Goddess) and Castor (Wind God)!"

The soldiers under Pale were filled with morale.

They went straight south for the village, picking up other soldiers along the way.

"Gather under the flag of Symphoria!" Felbi said as he led the army.

As he did, he made sure to put the wounded and the able into different groups. Those who couldn't fight were put on standby at the back. They hurried even more to where the flames were.

By the time they got there, the flames were already walls of flames.

"The demihuman units have rebelled? Felbi! From here on, consider all of the demihumans enemy!"

Though the approaching demihumans were few, Pale still trembled. With the demihumans' rebellion, 200 soldiers were taken from their forces and added to the enemy's. All that was left was the 300 soldiers under her and the scattered soldiers.

"Cast water onto the flames! Create a path!"

The water mages forcefully separated the elven warriors from the demihumans and

extinguished the flames. After a big enough path was created, Pale and her soldiers left the area.

They made their way toward the village while fighting a hard battle and paying attention to the direction of the wind. From time to time, when the black smokes were low, they would use magic to stir it up, allowing them to make their way with the smoke as cover.

Breaking through the wall of flames, Pale ordered her soldiers through the opened path.

On the other side, the village was still standing.

“It deviated to the west a bit!” Pale muttered to herself.

They could still do this, she told herself.

There were some elves surrounded by goblins.

“Save our allies! First Platoon to Third Platoon, attack!” Pale commanded.

“Alright! Let’s go, boys! Attack!” Felbi said after Pale.

The moment Felbi led the vanguard to fight the goblins, Pale gave orders to the archers at the back.

“Watch our allies. High-angle fire, two shots!”

Pale drew her bow as well.

“Fire!”

At that, the goblin encirclement broke, but before they could finish them off, they retreated.

“They’re getting used to this, but... We can’t lose yet,” Pale said as she confirmed the situation.

The scope of the fire wasn’t that big. They should be able to save several of their

brethren.

“Felbi, keep going and push back the goblins! Archer unit cover them! Fourth to Sixth Platoon, you are to rescue our brethren!”

After saving their allies, they asked them where the chiefs were.

When they responded ‘East’, for some reason, Pale’s eyes went dark. That was a long way away, but they had to do it. After collecting herself, Pale started handing out orders again.

“First Platoon, Second Platoon, watch the rear. Third Platoon to Sixth Platoon, you are to rescue our chiefs! Forward!”

The heavy infantry – the First and Second Platoon – were to suppress the goblins, while the light infantry were to save the chiefs.

Like that Pale headed east with the elves they’d saved as their guides.



After crushing about three elven platoons, the battle demon, Gi Jii Yubu, received a powerful attack, causing their encirclement to break.

“This is...”

The force of these new enemies were clearly much greater than before! They were faster, stronger, and had high morale! But more than anything else was that powerful pressure they exuded!

Gi Jii Yubu knew this pressure well. After all, he had lost the king’s soldiers countless times to it. He couldn’t possibly forget it.

Gi Jii grit his teeth. “I’ve been waiting, Pale Symphoria!!”

He held his spear so tight it seemed like he was about to crush it, then he ordered his men. “Reform battle lines! Gi Ah, Gi Ii, hold position until Gi Ba finishes retreating, then retreat in order!”

The goblin forces that had become panicked because of the raining arrows gradually fixed their formation.

A fire burned within Gi Ji, but despite that, his mind was perfectly clear.

“Gi Ah, Gi Ii, spears at the ready! Take a detour through the left and attack the enemy inside the flames!”

The fire was gradually nearing the back of Pale’s soldiers, but it was also burning the village.

The soldiers at the vanguard were equipped with armor as usual. Neither spear nor sword could really get through them.

If so, then the most they could do now was to attack them inside the flames even if it means incurring damage themselves. That was the only path to victory.

Gi Jii gave those orders after immediately realizing that.

“Nu!?”

But just when he thought the enemy would push toward them, they suddenly retreated. In fact, the light infantry that were suppressing them all this time were actually moving east.

“You intend to go to our lord?”

Gi Jii thought the enemy was aiming for the king.

“I don’t believe our lord will lose, but... As long as I’m still standing, you can forget about touching the king!”

For the sake of the famed name of Gi Gu Verbena, Gi Ji, who had been given authority over the king’s army, could not allow the enemy to run from in front of him.

“Gi Ii, take the vanguard and pursue the enemy! Don’t let them near our lord!” Gi Jii commanded.

The explorer, Gi Ii, led his goblins and pursued the enemy.

“Gi Ah, Gi Ba, you are to take the enemy from their flanks!”

After the three rare-class goblins went their way, Gi Jii ferociously laughed.

“My lord, soon I will be able to offer you Pale Symphoria’s head.”



I went south according to my warrior’s instinct. I counted the time we had left after glancing at the fire approaching from behind, and then I prompted the soldiers to move faster.

As we passed by the trees the elves used for their dwelling, the enemy elves came to view. They stood close to each other in a tight formation.

“Go! Trample them!” I commanded.

As I swung Flamberge, Rashka ran alongside me.

“I’ll be going ahead!” Rashka said with a fierce smile.

“You wish to go ahead of me? Then go! But don’t ever stop, Rashka!” I said.

“Ridiculous! Who do you think you’re talking to? In front of me, even the mountains will make way!”

A black light filled the two clubs in Rashka’s hands.

“Clad me in ^{Ra Gilion} violence’s dignity!”

Black light gathered onto the two clubs, and then it shot towards the tight formation of the elves, scattering them.

“Anyone who stands in my way will be crushed!” Rashka’s bellowing declaration made the elves cower.

As I watched Rashka’s gallant figure create an opening with brute force, I ordered the

soldiers. “Follow Rashka! Slaughter the enemy!”

Battle cries resounded from behind at my command.

The srilana armor of the elves were crushed before Rashka’s brutish strength. When his clubs swung down, helms were crushed. When his clubs swung up, elves went flying. Even the heavy infantry wasn’t spared.

One of the elf groups stood out. Heavy infantry surrounded numerous gaudily dressed men. They were probably the bigwigs.

Good! If we get them, we can put an end to all this!

“The enemy’s leaders are there! Take their heads and put an end to this war!”

At my behest, the elves, the Gaidga tribe, the demihumans, the normal goblins, everyone followed after Rashka and wreaked havoc throughout the battlefield.

—255 days until the war with the humans.

CHAPTER 137

SYLPH UNIFICATION WAR XII

“Fuck! This is a waste of time!” Shumea cursed after cutting down the elves blocking their way.

Shumea and the elven escorts protected Selena as they ran away from the black smoke.

“Why are elves so stubborn!?” Shumea complained as she roughly wiped her cheeks of soot and blood.

“S-Sorry...” Selena found herself apologizing for some reason.

“I’m not blaming you. Anyway, let’s hurry. They know we’re here.” Shumea wryly smiled and rubbed Selena’s head.

After catching some elves to ascertain Pale’s location, they ran through the smokes and the flames.

“...What are you going to do once we find her? You have thought of it, right?”

From what they’ve gathered, Pale was currently leading an army of elite soldiers.

Shumea has already considered the worst possible scenario, but despite that, she didn’t have any intentions of dissuading Selena from meeting her.

“I don’t know, but I think I’ll know once I meet her. At that time, I don’t think I’ll regret it even if I end up as the king’s enemy.”

“I’ve always liked how gutsy you are,” Shumea said, then she turned around to the elven escorts given to them by Fei. “You can go back now. If you keep following us, you might end up drawing your bows against your master,” she said.

The elves looked at each other, then one of them stepped forward.

“Our duty is to protect you, Lord Shumea. We will accompany you until we have

ascertained that you are indeed Forni's enemy," the elf said.

"Naive. Or maybe you're stupid... Well, I don't hate that though. I'm kinda like that myself after all."

After running past the black smoke, Shumea looked around her.

"We've arrived at the eastern side. That way should be the north!" Shumea said.

"Can I ask you a question?" One of the elven escorts asked.

"Make it short," Shumea said.

"Lord Pale is the enemy commander. Surely, she will be accompanied by many soldiers. What will you do about them?" The elven escort asked.

"We'll break through," Shumea matter-of-factly said.

The elven escorts were speechless.

"Do you have a plan?" The elven escort asked.

"Of course not! The only thing I've got is a girl's guts! So if you're going to tag along, you better make sure you don't wet your pants!"

As they ran, the figure of the goblin king and the elves fighting came to view.

"Is everyone ready?" Shumea asked.

When they nodded, she narrowed her eyes.

"Let's take happiness with our own hands. Even if it means prying it from fate's mouth by force."

Loved by a resident of the fire god's household, the god of flame, Hektokrups, Shumea smiled fiercely in the face of battle as she cried out to foe and ally alike.

"Ora ora ora! Get out of the way! A human is passing through!!"



Rashka's black light blew up on the tightly packed enemy formation. His speed didn't slow down even a little as he charged toward the enemy. That valiant charge of his affected the other warriors, and we followed after him.

Rashka swung both of his clubs at every direction. Battle-wise, he was indeed one of the best among the goblins.

His great strength bore a hole in the armored elves' line. As his rampage continued, the elves' movement gradually became duller.

"Just a little more and we'll be able to win! Don't slow down even for a moment!" I said, causing the goblins to cry out in response along with the Fang Tribe and the elves.

But then a rain of arrows descended where Rashka was.

"Nu!?"

When I turned around, the enemy was there.

The light infantry that arrived aimed at Rashka. Their movements were like the turning of the waves. There was not even a single hint of hesitation in them as they attacked in turn. But what was most conspicuous of all was the great morale they had!

—So you've come, Pale Symphoria!"

The chiefs or the tactician. Whose head should I pluck?

For a moment, I wasn't sure what to do, but in the end, I decided to go for the enemy chiefs.

I ordered Rashka to proceed while defending only as much as necessary.

Selena and Shumea couldn't reach her in time, it seems.

Alas! I cannot hold back in battle! Especially, one so strong!

"Rashka, keep going like that and take the heads of the enemy chiefs! That will be the

greatest achievement in this battle!" I said.

"Alright!" Rashka fearlessly smiled as he raised his clubs.

"Fei, Mido! We're intercepting the new enemy! Follow!"

"Understood!" Mido said.

"As you wish," Fei said.

I aimed my sword at the new enemy.

They could move quickly, but they had to sacrifice their armor to achieve that.

Wielding my sword by my side, I swung it from below.

—Pale Symphoria is up ahead. I should take her head myself. It is only courteous to do so.

As ether coursed through my legs, I lowered my body enough for Flamberge to touch the ground.

The main force was with Rashka. As for the rest: the remaining demihumans, the elves, and the rest of the goblins – they fought with me.

"My life is like dust!"
Accel



After confirming sighting of the chiefs' army, Pale gave orders to the soldiers.

" platoons, advance in line! Avoid the goblins as much as you can. Felbi second platoon, to the front!"

Pale ordered the second platoon that was protecting their rear to go to the front. In exchange, she ordered the third platoon to move to the rear.

When Pale sent a fleeting glance at the goblins, she immediately noticed their high

morale, then she looked toward the front again. The giant black goblin was leading an army of demihumans, elves, and goblins. There was a leader for every group.

Could she really do this? She asked herself as she looked up.

“Everyone, give me strength.”

Suddenly, she closed her eyes and thought back to the days when she fought with the members of Clan Elks.

Pale’s quiet mutterings were drowned out by the sound of war.

“I can do this! I’m going to protect my family!” Pale opened her eyes and said that to herself.

Their aim was the three-headed beast of an army that was headed toward them.

“Archers, parallel volley! After me!”

Pale pulled an orichalcum arrow from her quiver and filled it with ether.

“Second, fourth, fifth, and sixth platoon! Parry the enemy ahead! We’re going to graze past their nose and save the chiefs!”

She intentionally spoke like that. Normally, she preferred to speak with more formality, but that kind of language was unsuited during war.

The various platoons cried out in response to Pale’s commands.

As she released the string of her bow, the sound of wind cutting echoed alongside the cries of the orichalcum arrow. It flew fiercely through the air as it shot forth toward the enemy.

Wind Shot
“Winds, give me power!”

Her target was the Fang Tribe member leading the demihumans.

That was none other than the man who double-crossed them. If she recalled correctly, his name was Mido, a Fang Tribe chief.

The enemy's vanguard was pursuing after the chiefs.

As she watched the rear guard be torn apart all at once, she followed after the arrow with her eyes. A fearsome scream resounded at its descent as Mido repelled it. But that one shot wasn't enough to break the enemy's formation. When the rest of the archers shot their arrows, the enemy forces finally stalled.

The second shot.

This time their aim was the elven army, which sought to stop them.

Barrel Shot
"Winds, give me your blessing!"

But the enemy noticed what they were trying, and their arrows passed by each other at roughly the same time. The wind pressure from their arrows altered each others' course, leaving behind a streak of red blood across Pale's temple.

Though they failed to follow-up that arrow, they still managed to hit the shoulder of the second head.

"Next!"

"GURUUuoOOOAaOA!"

As Pale drew her bow again, a world devouring howl bellowed. Its great pressure bore down on them as the Goblin King swung his black burning great sword to cut down the elves in half.

The light infantry wasn't his match.

Pale immediately gave out orders.

"Third and fourth platoon, go to the chiefs! Second platoon, make two lines from the front to the rear!"

Pale ordered the second platoon to make several layers of walls between her and the black goblin.

“Over here, monster! I’ll be your opponent!” Pale said.

She mustered all of her ether and gathered it onto her arrow.

Storm Bullet
“In the name of the fierce wind”

The gathered winds blew behind the arrow, propelling it forward as they drew a helix shape on the air.

“GURUuuOOOAaAoo!”

But just when the arrow seemed like it was about to hit the Goblin King, the Goblin King swung his black burning great sword, causing the collision of two great masses of ether.

The two masses of ether sought to destroy each other. The black flames tried to devour the arrow of wind, while the latter tried to bore through the black flames.

Pale was already at her knees due to the great consumption of ether.

The Goblin King ground his teeth and put forth even more ether into his great sword.

Pale finally understood that a direct confrontation was disadvantageous, so she switched roles from a warrior back to a commander.

After receiving the charge of the elves, the goblin forces were in chaos. Forcing their way through the interim of the goblin forces and the chiefs’ forces was exactly Pale’s plan.

With her elven forces attacking the goblins from the flank, the battle had slightly swung to their favor. But at this rate, they will have no choice but to withdraw from the battle and run. She looked at the rear and the front.

The rear was being held well by Felbi, while in the front were wounded demihumans. Despite that the elven forces had slowed down their momentum.

Pale figured that it should be possible to make use of the time difference to cut their

way through.

“GURUuuOOOAaA!”

—That’s if we can take down this monster, anyway.

The Goblin King, who could stop even Pale’s attack, was unstoppable. He was like a storm as he mowed his way through to Pale.

“Second platoon, move to the flanks!”

Pale was so spent that even her throat felt like it would burst from giving orders.

By moving the second platoon to the flanks, there would be no one to stop the Goblin King.

Hands shaking, she drew her bow once more.

“Come,” she said.

Her hands no longer shook when she held her arrows. Her focus, which she had sharpened all her life, allowed her to become as still as tranquil waters.

In her hands was a special Srilana (Blue-Silver Steel) arrow.

Her aim was the unstoppable Goblin King’s forehead.

Perfectly focused, she calmly aimed her bow.



I flicked the wind arrow and ran toward the enemy.

There was about a 50m distance between me and the enemy, a lone female elf with a bow in hand. That person was none other than Pale Symphoria, the elven warrior who has foiled our plans time and time again.

Standing in between us were several heavily armored elven warriors.

But did she think something like this would stop me? If I were the sort to stop because of something like this, I would never have said I would take her head in the first place!

“Second platoon, move to the flanks!”

A calm voice resounded throughout the battlefield, then the elven heavy infantry moved to the flanks.

With this there was no one standing in our way.

What is she thinking? I don't understand.

—But that doesn't matter!

Ether coursed through my legs as I wielded Flamberge in a low stance, then I bolted off. I leaped through the earth in a crawling fashion, closing our distance in the blink of an eye.

“Second platoon, close it!”

Suddenly, the heavy infantry that had moved to the flanks began to move back, closing the opening once more.

Were they aiming for me!?

With this I've been separated from the goblins.

Damn! The blood got to my head, and I lost sight of my surroundings. Now, I'm surrounded.

Well, then...

—In that case, I'll just have to meet your expectations, won't I!?

“GURUu00Aa0a0oo0!”

When I invoked the Soul of the Berserk King, soldiers behind me stopped mattering. It's not a one-on-one fight, so I can't maximize my strength, but I'm still able to bolster my strength in exchange for some sanity.

—Defiant Soul!

If my path of escape has been cut, then I'll just have to cut a new one!

If I'm surrounded, then I'll just have to break through!

That's all there is to it!

With the invocation of The Third Chant, the black flames surging from Flamberge became fiercer. In fact, they burned so fierce I had to suppress them a bit.

I don't need a place to run!

—There is an enemy! An enemy, enemy, enemy, enemy, enemy in front!!!

After struggling to take back control of my crazed mind, I swung Flamberge at the soldiers around me.

The raging black flames tore through their shields and deflected their weapons.

The heavy infantry was different from the light infantry.

When I felt Flamberge stop, I turned, and there I saw three elven warriors.

I am going to pluck Pale Symphoria's head!

After sweeping with Flamberge, I held it toward the front and rammed it along with my body into the enemy formation.

“My life is like a cloud of ^{Enchant}dus”

Ether blew up behind me, propelling me forward as my black-flame clad sword tore through the air and penetrated the elven soldiers.

The complex invocations of ether coupled with the wall of air I pushed myself through left my vision covered in a layer of burning heat.

But I didn't stop. I kept going with my great sword penetrated into the elven warriors, using them as a shield.

“—, GU— Ga—!”

Incomprehensible sounds leaked through my mouth, but I ignored them and continued to deflect the enemies in front.

After a while, I finally broke through the enemy formation.

I took the elven-branded corpse shield I had and threw it away, then I walked toward Pale Symphoria.

I've won!”

“GURUUuoOA0aAA!”



The Goblin King was overwhelming.

Not even the wall of heavy infantry could stop him in his path as he swung that giant sword of his with terrifying strength.

Black flames clad his great sword, sharpening its blade. Srilana (Blue-Silver Steel) had a dispersing effect on ether, but the Goblin King still managed to cut through the soldiers with ease.

But it was also because of that that Pale Symphoria knew he could reach her.

Pale looked on at the majestic figure of the king.

She knew full well what the price of dragging this king who could lead so many out here.

From the start, Pale's only goal was to kill the Goblin King.

Hordes of goblins she had never before seen followed him. The demihumans followed him. Even the elves...

At first, Pale couldn't believe her eyes, but it didn't take long for her to realize she wasn't dreaming.

The elves under Shure Forni might indeed be the ones standing in their way, but the one that brought everything together, allowing this war to rage on, was actually this Goblin King.

The spectacular retreats during the battle on the highways, or the plan to sacrifice the village to overcome their lack of numbers. Chances were that this Goblin King was behind everything.

What a terrifying existence.

But that was precisely why she had to slay him.

The main pillar was the Goblin king; therefore, if he were to die, then the whole structure that was the enemy army would come tumbling down.

The vigorous, enthusiastic goblin army was all Pale needed to see through the Goblin King's true nature: a crazed warrior.

To such a person, it didn't matter how big the prey was. To him, there was nothing he couldn't hunt.

So she laid out some bait and lured him into a trap.

"Second platoon, go after the third platoon! Once you've reached them, run to Symphoria without stopping!"

Rescue the chiefs and retreat to Symphoria. The light infantry had already received those orders beforehand. Even their path of retreat through the west.

Her last orders having been given, Pale prepared to face the strongest enemy.

Her bow was loaded with the Trichella Arrow, which she had specially ordered from a koro dwarf. It was a powerful arrow that would split itself several times before burying itself into its target. An arrow that could instantly slay its target.

The Goblin King's special trait was the enormous amount of ether he possessed.

Those black flames probably originated from Altesia, the Goddess of the Underworld, or Ya Jansu, the Night God, either of which were detestable to the elves.

Pale would disperse the Goblin King's ether, and then kill him.

Pale had previously learned from the east the method of sealing ether. That was her trump card.

To that end, Srilana (Blue-Silver Steel) and Trichella Arrow were both necessary. In fact, she had asked for Trichella Arrow to be made the moment she saw the Goblin King. Unfortunately, preparing it was so difficult that they could only prepare this single arrow.

She could not miss. If she missed, she was guaranteed to die.

The sounds deafened as her focus heightened. The Goblin King's sword swung like a storm.

When Pale thought he had stopped, he suddenly accelerated with terrifying speed.

"...!?"

Pale panicked for a moment at the sudden increase in the Goblin King's speed, but she quickly regained her calm.

The Goblin King was too fast.

As the Goblin King threw away the corpse of the skewered elven warrior, the warrior's blood splattered onto Pale.

Despite that, Pale didn't even twitch.

Pale needed just one moment, one moment where she was sure the Goblin King wouldn't be able to dodge, so she decided to shoot the moment he swung his blade.

The Goblin King was too formidable, however. Even if she did manage to shoot the arrow, his sword would still surely cut her in half.

—Death.

Pale knew she was going to die, but despite that she did not falter.

—Sorry, Selena... It looks like I won't be able to meet you after all.

In the silence, where all sounds were absent, Pale quietly apologized to Selena.

Then in a flash, a powerful wind erupted from the silent Pale.

From silence to movement.

Pale opened her eyes wide and glared at the Goblin King. The gaze shooting from her eyes threatened even the Goblin King, but the die had already been cast. His sword mid-flight, he could no longer retreat, so he mustered even more ether, causing his black flames to burn even fiercer.

“Pale!!”

It was then that a voice suddenly cried out.

“Huh?”

For just one moment, Pale forgot everything and turned toward that voice.

Because of that she shot the Trichella Arrow a moment later than she'd intended.

“HiyaaaAAaA!!!”

“Nu!?”

Shumea jumped in between Pale and the King, parrying the king's attack with the spin of her spear.

The king had immediately noticed what was going on, so he changed the direction of his great sword.

Unfortunately, because of that, he couldn't dodge the Trichella Arrow in time, and he

was forced to his knees.

“Shumea—” The king was about to say something, but after seeing Shumea’s current state, he swallowed his words.

On Shumea’s back were wounds incurred from magic, while the spear she’d used was cut in half, her hand bloodied.

Yet she still smiled fearlessly and said to Selena, “Go.”

After she saw Selena embrace Pale, she finally lost the last of her strength and she fell to her knees.

“Sorry, Boss...”

“Reckless girl.”

The Goblin King stood with his great sword as support.



Behind Shumea were the elven escorts who had cast a spell on her.

She couldn’t make it in time with normal means, so it seems she had them cast their spell on her to propel her forward like a bullet. What a reckless plan.

Because of that though I don’t feel like killing Pale anymore.

“I hope you realize you’re being punished once this battle ends,” I said.

“Please be gentle— Ow!”

I tried to stand up with my great sword, but I couldn’t muster any strength and ended up on my knees again.

The ether that usually came welling was nowhere to be seen. When I looked down to my body, I noticed the three arrows stuck on my body.

“So you’re the reason.”

When I took an arrow out, my strength started coming back. After taking everything out, I could feel my strength return.

The heavy infantry Gi Jii had been suppressing was now heading here.

“It seems we don’t have the leisure to be lazing around.”

I still hadn’t fully recovered, but I still forced myself back up and tried to point my sword at Pale only to end up taking a step back.

This is bad. I still can’t gather my ether. If the enemy army arrives, I’ll be in trouble.

“Pale!” While I was trying to get my footing, the warriors Gi Jii had been suppressing arrived. They unsheathed their swords, wary of me, then after carrying Pale and Selena, retreated.

I thought of chasing them, but unfortunately, I couldn’t get any strength into my arms.

“We’re retreating! Go!!” An elven man commanded.

“My lord!!” Gi Jii said.

Looking around, there were no more elves left. Relieved, I thrust my sword into the ground and fell to my knees.

“Are you alright!?” Gi Jii asked.

I nodded. “Chase them, but don’t go too deep. Also, inform Rashka and Gi Ji to...”

—No.

I fought back the urge to fall asleep and forced myself up.

I am the king.

I must stay strong.

Gritting my teeth, I raised my voice and commanded Gi Jii. “Go, Gi Jii Yubu. Do not let

them escape!”

“As you command!” Gi Jii said kneeling, then he ran after the enemy.

With this we’ve successfully taken back Symphoria.

—255 days until the battle with the humans.



Level has risen.

59 => 71

Gi Do’s level has risen.

89 => 1 (Class UP)

Gi Za Zakuend’s level has risen.

61 => 82

Gi Ji Arsil’s level has risen.

21 => 37

Gi Ba’s level has risen.

53 => 81

Gi Jii Yubu’s level has risen.

5 => 27

Gi Ah’s level has risen.

10 => 42

Gi Ii’s level has risen.

6 => 38

Gi Uu’s level has risen.

13 => 40

Hal’s level has risen.

95 => 5 (Class UP)

Mido's level has risen.

97 => 5 (Class change!)

Cynthia's level has risen.

1 => 36

Shumea's level has risen.

67 => 89

CHAPTER 138

SYLPH UNIFICATION WAR XIII

The Battle Demon, Gi Jii Yubu, led the assassin, Gi Ji Arsil, and the wrathful demihumans as they chased after the Symphoria army all the way to the Symphoria forest. Along the way, they captured the forests of Sheng and Jirad, leaving only Symphoria on the resistance's side.

Many elves was defeated in the battle at Sinfall, bringing the casualties and number of captured soldiers to approximately 200 men in total. Because of that they had no choice but to flee to Symphoria.

The gates of Symphoria were shut tight, not opening even once since the elves returned.

As for me, that just means I have more time to examine the newly evolved goblins and formulate a new plan.

"If they won't attack, we'll have no choice but to attack," Shure said.

There's just no other way, but on the other hand, if we attack recklessly we might just get done in by Pale's schemes.

"But sheer brute force isn't a strategy," Shure added.

A meeting was currently being held in one of the houses of Sinfall. The one talking was Shure, who had been a great help in these past few battles.

"In other words, attacking head on would be inane," the representative of the demihumans, Nikea, said, causing Shure to nod.

"What a pain, just beat them up be done with it already," Mido complained.

"And add more corpses to your dead brothers? Imbecile," Nikea spat as she glared coldly at the werewolf.

“They’re scared!” Mido argued. “We should attack while the war favors us!”

He had a point, however. If we kept wasting time like this, we might end up throwing away the momentum we’ve gained.

“We should surround Symphoria then,” I said, causing all eyes to gather on me.

Symphoria was big, so big that the southern part of it was a desert while the northern part of it connected to Sheng. The boundaries on its flanks were ambiguous.

“How?” Mido asked with a stiff voice; and that was not because of his wounds.

“We can clear a path through the forest.” I drew a circle with my fingers on Shure’s map.

“...Is this feasible?” Nikea asked.

For a moment, Shure became thoughtful with a hand on his chin, then he turned toward me with a clever look on his face. “It should be possible so long as we concentrate our forces. If nothing gets in our way, we should be able to execute within 20 days.”

Of course, this whole plan was actually a bait to lure out some prey. To that end, we needed to ensure that word got out.

“There’s no need for us to go about this quietly. If anything let’s execute our plans boldly in the light of the day with loud voices and cheering. In fact, we should do it while yelling ‘At this rate, you’re all going to starve!’”

The demihumans gradually understood what I was aiming for.

“Hmm, will it really be that effective?” The only one who couldn’t quite comprehend yet was Shure.

It’s not surprising though, after all the elves have never understood what it meant to starve. They don’t understand how terrifying it is.

He probably didn’t think much of the blockade last time either. At most, he probably only thought of it as a mild annoyance, though I thought it was quite sinister myself...

Did I overestimate him?

“There’s no need to actually starve them, just the fear of it will do,” I said.

Compared to actually starving, the fear of starving would demoralize the enemy much faster.

“I see, so you intend to flush them out by scaring them with the threat of starvation,” Nikea said, thinking out loud with her arms folded.

“I don’t think that’s possible,” Shure quietly interjected as he looked at Symphoria on the map. “They are not so foolish as to fight a losing battle. Falun Gastair is with them.”

Shure’s sworn friend was still within Symphoria, playing his part as a chief who had surrendered.

I don’t understand that old man well, but if he can somehow prove useful in collapsing the enemy from within, I won’t complain.

“Let us hope he comes through then, but until then, it would be foolish for us not to have a contingency plan. I take it we are fully prepared for the last battle?” I said.

“Of course!” Mido said.

“Naturally,” Nikea said.

I turned to Shure. “Let us make the last battle a spectacular one.”

“As you wish. With this, we will finally be able to put an end to this fruitless war, and I will finally be able to show you that your investment was not a waste,” Shure said.

After the meeting, I went outside and bitterly smiled at Rashka and the other goblins waiting.

“Unfortunately, it seems we will have to wait a bit longer,” I said.

“Hmph... It seems the fun will have to wait,” Rashka said.

“A pity, my lord,” Gi Jii said.

Then I turned to the gathered goblins and said, “What happens next depends on how the elves will move, but...”



I examined the newly evolved goblins and gave family names to those worthy.

Status	
Name	Gi Do Buruga
Race	Goblin
Level	1
Class	Shaman
Possessed Skills	Magic Manipulation; Realized Wings; Protection of the Wind; Wind Spear; Three-Verse Chant; Guidance of the Goddess of Knowledge; Researcher
Divine Protection	Wind God
Attributes	Wind

Realized Wings

Can fly for a short duration.

Researcher

Higher chance to stumble onto a new discovery.

Protection of the Wind

Incurred damage can be rendered null. (LOW)

Wind Spear

Conjures a spear made out of wind. When used accuracy and power are both increased.

Status	
Name	Hal
Race	Paradua Goblin
Level	3
Class	Noble; Chief
Possessed Skills	Mounted Spear Mastery; Beast Control; Spear Mastery C+; Leadership C+; Charge; Cooperation B-; Riding; Inspire; Fierce Charge; Hero of the Battlefield
Divine Protection	None
Attributes	None
Subordinate Beasts	Miou

His ability to wield the spear and cooperate with others have both increased. He has also acquired a new skilled called 'Hero of the Battlefield'.

Hero of the Battlefield

When fighting a lone enemy alone, attack, defense, and critical rate are increased.

Status	
Name	Mido
Race	Werewolf
Level	5
Class	Chief; Tribe Guardian
Possessed Skills	King of Tyranny
Divine Protection	Wind God
Attributes	Wind

King of Tyranny

In exchange for inflicting damage on oneself, one's physical abilities are heightened.

After seeing everyone's status, I began organizing the soldiers. I reorganized the druids with the newly evolved Shaman, Gi Do, as one of the main pillars. I moved the wounded to the back and had those still able to fight to form new three-man cells, then

I created a new unit with ten such cells.

I distributed the soldiers in order to the Battle Demon, Gi Jii Yubu, the assassin, Gi Ji Arsil, and to the rest of the noble goblins.

When all was done, I went to the house the elves gave me.

“How are you doing?” I asked.

“You’ve been spoiling me a lot, Boss,” Shumea wryly smiled as she raised herself up on the bed.

“Don’t worry, I’ll work you lots once you’re up and running.”

It would be a pity to lose her. I still need her in the war against the humans.

I know full well from this war against the elves just how difficult it is to gather intel in a war between different species.

Before the war against the elves had broken, while we were still fighting the demihumans, what would have happened if one of my allies happened to slip into the enemy lines?

It wasn’t exactly Shure’s idea, but after one of ours infiltrated the enemy lines, the enemy became divisive and the war progressed smoothly.

Still, I didn’t expect someone like Pale to join the fray. Symphoria’s resistance was a lot greater than expected.

In any case, there is one thing to learn here: I cannot fight a united human race.

They must be divided.

“...Is that my punishment?” Shumea asked.

“Yes, so you should heal up until then,” I said.

“Being tolerant is good and all, but... Don’t you think you’re being too lenient, Boss?”

I raised one of my brows and wryly smiled. “Then I’ll have to think of a better punishment. I know, shall I whip you in the plaza for all to see?”

“W-W-Wait a moment! I’ll die if you do that!” Shumea said in panic, arms flailing.

I folded my arms. “If you think my punishment is too light, work yourself hard enough to make up for it. But right now you should rest. I can’t have you work while injured. I mean you can’t even use your strength, can you?”

“Well, alright. Can’t say I really have anything to complain about when you’re feeding me all the yummy stuff and letting me sleep on this fluffy bed,” Shumea said, then she heaved a sigh and looked up at me. “Hey, Boss, about Selena...”

“We don’t know yet. If it’s something I can help, I’ll try to tide things over, don’t worry.”

“This debt is going to be heavy.”

“Don’t worry. I’ll work you so hard you’ll start screaming.”

“Ooh, scary... Then I guess I’ll have to rest lots.”

“That’s right. Rest. Rest well.”

The war against the humans aside, I do hold her tendency to risk her life for others highly. Besides, I didn’t exactly want to see a young woman die anyway... It would’ve reminded me of Reshia, after all.

I failed to save her.

Try and try as I might to forget, the events of that day continue to haunt me.

A little glance away from the battlefield, a moment of negligence... and all of the sudden, the worst possible end flashes through my mind.

Gripping my hands tight, I desperately denied such a conclusion.

“Wait for me...” I whispered.

Brushing away the cries of remorse welling from deep within, I moved on.



“We should attack!” Felbi said.

In the residence of the Symphoria chief, within a large room, was a meeting where the prominent members discussed how they were to deal with the predicament at hand.

The chiefs Fenit, Sheng, Jirad, and Priena had fled here after losing Sinfall. Falun Gastair was also with them, though his village was yet to capitulate. Pale and Felbi were also present.

Felbi has been persistently asking for a while now that they attack posthaste.

Word of the Goblin-Forni Army’s objective had already reached Symphoria through the distant village of Gastair. Just as the intel said, the Goblin-Forni army have started attacking Symphoria’s supply lines.

“If we don’t attack now, it’ll be too late!” Felbi insisted.

“But can we win if we do fight? The difference in our strength should be clear as day,” Falun said, causing Felbi to frown.

“It would be difficult indeed, but delaying only makes our situation worse,” Felbi said.

“So you wish to gamble everything on one battle instead? Do you really think we can win?” Falun’s calm gaze bore heavily on Felbi. “The only soldiers that can fight are the same soldiers who have been fighting from the start. The volunteer soldiers from the small villages have started plotting their escape the moment their villages were captured. Exactly how many soldiers do you think we can muster?”

“...50 heavy infantry, 60 light infantry, 70 archers. This are our current forces,” Pale calmly said, causing all eyes to gather on her, though she didn’t say a word more.

“According to Gastair’s intel, the enemy has taken in the soldiers from the other villages, bringing their current forces to 700,” Falun said.

The enemy was literally three times bigger than their army. The gravity of that difference caused the whole room to go silent.

“Pale,” Felbi called out despite growing irritated at Falun’s incessant questioning. He wanted to seek her opinion, which she gave without turning to him.

“The first issue is the numerical disparity. Sending the same soldiers that fought in the last battle would only tire them out, so it is indeed impossible to increase our numbers, but—”

“Enough!” Fenit, the representative of Symphoria, interjected. “The meeting is adjourned!”

“What? But Pale is still—” Felbi argued.

“Shut it!” Fenit said. “As chief of Symphoria, I hereby order this meeting be adjourned!”

“Ku... I understand. Please excuse me,” Felbi said, standing up and then bowing before finally leaving the room. Pale helplessly followed after him.

After they left, Fenit clicked his tongue in anger. “Did they really think we would stake everything on one battle!? If we followed their plan, who knows what terrifying fate awaits us! At this rate!”

“The goblins will eventually make their move,” Falun said.

The chiefs all gulped when Falun pointed that out.

“We can’t supply our soldiers forever. Not even the emergency reserves will be enough to feed everyone. Not to mention, the soldiers fighting would truly be nothing more than a last stand. At this rate, the long history of Symphoria will vanish into nothingness,” Falun added, causing all members of the meeting to stop breathnig for a moment as they imagined that terrifying possibility.

“What should be done then?” Jirad asked. Fenit had gone completely quiet out of depression, but he thought the old elf might have a plan in mind. “Is there any guidance you might be willing to share with us, elder?”

“There is, but it is a humiliating path, perhaps more painful than death,” Falun said.

“You couldn’t possibly...” Priena gulped in a long while since losing Sinfall.

“We should reconcile. Look for a way to make peace,” Falun said.

“Now? Of all times?” The short statured Silver who had barely managed to flee Sheng with his life powerlessly shook his head.

“Perhaps a mere surrender won’t be accepted. In that case, we could offer them a tribute of some kind,” Falun said.

By this time, the people gathered finally understood where Falun was getting at. Now, they wondered who Falun had in mind. They exchanged glances among themselves, wondering wretchedly who should be sacrificed.

“For example, the person who made them suffer the most in this war,” Falun suggested.

Silver immediately disapproved. “But that’s...”

But Fenit was all for it. “Do you think they’ll accept?”

He even ignored Silver and directly asked Falun how likely the goblins were to accept.

“The enemies are goblins. Have you ever heard of a goblin refusing a fair maiden? Not to mention, the very person responsible for much of their suffering.”

“Meanwhile, we can bide our time and recover our forces,” Jirad said, earning Priena’s approval.

“Goblin rule wouldn’t last anyway. I’m sure even Shure will be abandoned.”

At the onset of a faint hope, the voices of the chiefs naturally became smaller.

“But who’s going to negotiate peace with them? Will Shure even hear us out?” Jirad asked, causing the room to go quiet again.

“Let me take that stage,” Falun confidently said. “I was once his teacher, after all.”

There was no other path left. They had their doubts, but there was nothing they could do but accept Falun’s proposal and see how things go.

“What about the soldiers? Do you think they’ll quietly accept this?” The chief of Sinfall,

Priena, asked.

Falun caressed his beard. “That will be a problem, actually. We will have to find a way to separate her from the soldiers.”

“I-I have something that can help with that! I have proof that Pale betrayed us!” Fenit excitedly said.

Unfortunately, poor Fenit did not notice Falun’s mischievous smile as he excitedly revealed his plans. And neither did the rest of the excited chiefs.

From that day on, a strange rumor started circulating within Symphoria.

—Pale has been tricked by the demigod of the night god’s household, Verdna, and has betrayed us. That’s why we lost!

That rumour quickly spread.



10 days after the meeting, it suddenly happened.

Selena and Pale were relaxing in their residence when out of the blue, the door was suddenly kicked, and in came rushing Fenit’s private soldiers. Before anyone knew it, Pale was tied up with a rope and a sword was pointed at her neck.

“What are you doing!?” Selena cried, but the soldiers quickly knocked her out to make her quiet.

Without a word, those same soldiers took Pale and dragged her to the plaza, where the people showered her with jeers.

Waiting for her there were Fenit and the other chiefs.

“I can’t believe you had the gall to betray us, Pale!” Fenit’s voice was tinged with both hate and a faint trace of joy.

The crowd jeered harder when they heard Fenit’s accusation.

“W-What are you saying!?” Pale thought she was seeing a nightmare. “What is the meaning of this, Fenit!?”

“Don’t call my name with your dirty mouth, traitor!” Fenit said as he slapped Pale on the cheek.

“This woman has sold her soul to the demigod of the night god’s household, Verdna, and has brought a calamity upon my village!” Fenit declared.

“What foolish thing are you saying! I have no relations with Verdna!” Pale argued.

“Unfortunately, we have eyewitnesses. Two, in fact.” Fenit pointed to a female elf he had whispered to once before and a man serving in her unit as a messenger.

“I stand witness that Pale Symphoria has indeed spoken to Verdna at the bathhouse of Sheng!” The woman said out loud.

“That wasn’t Verdna!” Pale argued.

“Not Verdna!? Then who was it you were meeting at Sheng’s bathhouse?” Fenit asked.

“I... I don’t know that either, but—”

“Look! The traitor can’t even come up with an excuse! Truly, a detestable liar!”

“You’re wrong! I’m not—”

Pale desperately tried to defend herself but her words could only vanish into the jeering crowd.

“Let us hear what the people want then! Those who wish to see Pale executed, clap your hands!”

The resulting applause was like the heavy downpour of death, crying out for Pale’s soul.

“I have heard your pleas. And I would like to grant your wish! But before that, there is something I wish to ask,” Fenit asked.

The crowd went quiet.

“Pale has indeed committed a great crime. But can we oppose the will of the gods? Is there anyone who can say with confidence that they could go against the will of the gods!?”

The crowd exchanged glances with each other.

“None, of course. I think so too. If destiny was decided by the gods, then would not Pale herself be no more than a victim?”

Falun was thinking that things had taken a strange turn, but Pale was able to correctly guess Fenit’s intention. The man was intending to use her until every drop of blood from her body had been sucked dry.

“That being said, however, we cannot simply let her go unpunished. For to do so would be to spit upon those who have perished; therefore—!”

Fenit spread his arms and said. “We shall crush her eyes, and then exile her!”

The crowd cheered at Fenit’s proclamation.



Sitting before me were the elders of the elves I’ve been fighting.

Every one of them looked at me with fear in their eyes as they either flattered me or frowned in disgust.

15 days after Sinfall capitulated, when we were halfway done with our roads as we prepared for our eventual clash with Pale, the report came.

The elves have surrendered.

“Impossible,” I thought immediately, but it was only for a moment, as the man who declared himself to be Falun Gastair’s messenger told us the appointed date and the procedure.

“Don’t they still have soldiers?” I asked Shure as soon as the messenger left.

“Elder Falun must’ve convinced them. As usual, he’s good with dirty things like this.”

Apparently, this was the real deal.

“Their conditions?” I asked.

“They will be handing Pale Symphoria, Selena Shiren, and the commander, Felbi,” Shure said.

“Isn’t Pale Symphoria their benefactor?”

It was precisely because of her that the chiefs were saved during the battle at Sinfall. Didn’t they abandon their lives during that battle?

“Elder Falun didn’t say anything in the reports about a trap. They seem to be truly intending to hand over their heroes in exchange for their lives,” Shure said with disgust.

He must be furious. After all, the race he is so proud of is acting like some lower lifeform. To someone as noble as him, it must be a feeling no different from having mud thrown at his face.

It seems Selena is being sent with them.

“I understand. We’ll accept their peace, but they must ensure that they hand over those people safely. If those people have even a scratch on them, they will pay with their heads.”

A curious look appeared on Shure’s beautiful face.

“You can’t use them as hostages, yet they’re that valuable?”

“They are far more valuable than having the chiefs as hostage. It wouldn’t do if they were to be killed just like that... Besides, with this we’ve finally unified the sylph.”

We have never spoken, but I am deeply interested in that elven woman, Pale. Polished strategies that led her armies to victory, a charm that encourages her allies... Yes, I must have her.

“...I have troubled you much during this war,” Shure quietly closed his eyes and deeply bowed.

“We’re friends, right? There’s no need to be so formal,” I wryly smiled.

Shure nodded. “Thank you for giving me this opportunity to deal with them with my own hands.”

“I only take what I want,” I said.

And then, we went to the designated place.



That day, the 76-day Sylph Unification War ended in the victory of the Goblin-Forni Army.

At the designated place, the leading actors, Pale and Felbi, were handed over to the goblins, but the Goblin-Forni coalition demanded one more thing from Symphoria.

They demanded that the chiefs be dismissed.

Of course, the chiefs refused, but then the Goblin King said this.

“Shall I draw the curtains on war once more?”

The pressure emanated by the Goblin King silenced the chiefs, forcing them to accept his conditions.

The Sage’s Council was recreated under Shure’s leadership, and the whole sylph race allied themselves with the goblins. From that day on, the elves began to move.

—240 days until the war with the humans.

CHAPTER 139

BANQUET I

Symphoria handed over Selena and the male man, who – if i recall correctly – was named Felbi. He glared at me with marked hostility, while Pale Symphoria had her eyes shut tight.

The people participating in this meeting were the elven chiefs, me, Gi Za Zakuend, and Nikea.

“It seems you failed to meet my demand,” I said.

“W-What are you saying!? We’ve given you the tactitian and the commander!” Fenit said with great fear.

I looked at him sharply. “I believe I asked that they be handed without injury.”

“But they resisted! There was nothing we could do!” The slender man called Nash Jirad argued.

“I don’t think you people understand your position,” Gi Za said, causing the enemy chiefs to look alternatingly between me and Shure. “Know that you stand here today because of our generosity. I hope you do not you misunderstood yourselves as being our equal.”

Nash Jirad ground his teeth so hard it could be heard clearly. That seemed to please Gi Za, as he spoke no more.

“You have hit Selena, and it seems there is something wrong with the tactitian’s eyes,” I said.

“Her eyes won’t open anymore. We all agreed to crush her eyes before exiling her. It was a decision made by the Sage’s Council. Your demands came too late,” the small-statured elf, Silver, said.

Rage took me, and before I knew it, I had him by the neck. “Lowlives! How low are you

willing to go? And to your benefactors no less!"

As I glared at the elven chiefs, I reached out for the great sword on my back.

When the elven chiefs saw that, they all screamed.

"King of goblins, your anger is well placed, but it is not your place to punish these people." But then Shure's calm voice suddenly resounded.

"These people—" I tried to argue.

"You are the benefactor of the elves and the king of the goblins, but you are not the king of the elves. Please do not forget that," Shure said with a gaze full of conviction, persuading me to put Silver back down on the ground.

"These people will be punished by the law, yes?" I said.

"Of course," Shure wilfully nodded.

At that, I withdrew.

Since the day we met, he made it clear that the elves had no need for a king... Even though there was none more fitting to ascend the throne aside from he himself.

As long as he believes that, the elves will never accept me lording over them.

"Thank you, Shure! As expected of the hero—" Fenit immediately tried to butter up to Shure after he stopped me, but Shure would have none of it.

"Silence!" He commanded with a sharp gaze and a loud voice all too rare for the usually composed Shure. "Truth be told, I would want nothing more than to cut you people into a million pieces this very instant! How long do you intend to throw mud on our face!? To think you have the gall to call yourselves chiefs!?"

The anger Shure had been fostering blew up, causing the elven chiefs to wince.

"Nash Jirad, Priena Sinfall, Silver Sheng, and Fenit Symphoria. I hereby strip you of your rights and responsibility as chiefs," Shure said.

“O-On what grounds!?” The chiefs asked.

“You don’t understand? It must be because you pushed your responsibilities to Pale and made her take the blame. Because of that she ended up working harder than anyone else and fought fiercer than anyone else, but really, that was supposed to be your responsibility,” Shure said, then he finished things off with one last proclamation. “Filthy heathens of the elven race, you should quietly wait in jail for your judgment.”

Shure quietly watched as Fei and the Forni soldiers arrested the chiefs.

“Now, what to do with you?” I said, turning to Felbi, Selena, and Pale.

“Pah! Goblin scum acting all arrogant!” Felbi spat.

I wryly smiled and spat back, “beaten mutts truly do bark loud.”

“What did you call me!?”

“You lost in battle, was betrayed by your allies... And now your lives are in my hands. If this isn’t defeat, what is?”

Felbi’s face flushed, and I curtly said, “I will give you a chance.”

“What chance?” Felbi asked.

“A chance to kill me, but if you lose, the man known as Felbi shall die.”

“You’re challenging me to a duel?”

“Yes. It was from battle that we were born, hence, it is only fitting that one finds life through it.”

As I passed an orichalcum long sword to Felbi, I took out my great sword.

“You’re going to regret this!” Felbi said as he swung his sword.

“That’s my line!” I said as I met his blade.

Seven days later, after losing seven times to me, Felbi finally admitted his defeat, and

the warrior known as Felbi died, leaving behind a man by the name of Felbi who was my subordinate.



Meanwhile, while the Goblin King was busy with his duel, Shure met Nash in his office. Nash was cuffed and wore an expressionless face.

“What’s the point of calling me out to a place like this? Does the chairman of the Sage’s Council have some sort of business with little old me?” Nash Jirad asked sarcastically.

Shure’s expression didn’t change as he threw a document on the desk. “What were you doing in Jirad’s hidden forests?”

Nash Jirad’s sarcasm vanished at that question, and he went completely quiet.

“...”

“It’s fine even if you don’t say anything. I’ll guess,” Shure said. “You tried to cultivate the land; tried to imitate the humans. And you even made slaves of the demihumans.”

“!?”

Nash Jirad’s twisted expression confirmed everything for Shure.

“Why would someone so proud such as yourself try to imitate the humans?” Shure asked. “I suppose there’s no need to ask.”

“Yes, it is as you’ve thought. We imitated them to prepare for the coming war with the humans,” Nash Jirad said, finally breaking the silence with a laugh. “If a war were to breakout between the elves and the humans, the forests would surely be razed to the ground. In that case, the elves were bound to starve. To avoid that, I started looking for an alternative way to procure food.”

“Why would you enslave our neighbors despite knowing of the human threat?” Shure asked.

Nash responded with scorn. “Because the people wouldn’t listen. It doesn’t matter how much insight a person has, the people would never accept anything that might

disadvantage them... even if one tried to explain the threat that looms. To the people, the forest is everything. It is their only livelihood, so I had no choice but to turn to the demihumans.”

“Just in case, you don’t have any intentions of working alongside me as a manager of those farms, do you?” Shure asked.

“Of course not. That is an endeavor we undertook to protect our pride. We have no reason to work with a traitor the likes of you,” Nash Jirad replied.

“I see... You may go.”

As Nash Jirad left through the door, Shure sighed deeply to himself.

“A pity... That insight.”

Left alone, those farms were bound to rot. He needed to discuss with the Goblin King what to do with them.



After Felbi joined our ranks, we held a large banquet just as Shure suggested.

There wasn’t much for the goblins to do in the land of the elves, but there was a lot to study, so Gi Za Zakuend decided to stay here and further his research on ether for the time being.

I would like to go back as soon as possible though.

We have already completed our goals here in the west. We have successfully gained favor with the elves and the demihumans and have even promoted many of our ranks. The anti-human coalition is starting to take shape, but the biggest prize in this trip is actually the acquisition of the world map. Shure had entrusted it to me.

Although the map was drawn with the elven forest at the center, it extends all the way to the continent and the seas. To the north were the mountains and to the south were the deserts. There was much left of this world to see, and that made my heart beat in anticipation.

I also want to return to the east as soon as possible to check up on Gi Ga Rax and the Fortress of the Abyss. The orcs and the kobolds are acting as a stopgap between the fortress and the humans, but that isn't absolute.

Not to mention, I recklessly requested reinforcements. I can't help but worry that we've been spread too thin.

The banquet being held was grand indeed, but it was by no means luxurious. There was plenty of meat to suit the goblins' taste and the elve's special wine was free to drink.

I walked over to the man who recently joined our ranks and poured ourselves a drink.

"I didn't think the Goblin King would partake in such activities," Felbi said with surprise as he watched me pour him a drink.

"I might be a goblin, but I do believe there to be much to learn from the elves. Cartography, literature, arithmetic... There is much to learn, and for the sake of defeating the humans, I believe we should strive to learn them. To that end, I intend to keep myself in your good graces."

Felbi whistled and called out to the now blind Pale. "It's pretty strange, don't you think? We're actually being treated better now than when we were with the chiefs."

Pale made a troubled laughter. "It is indeed strange... Just a few days ago we were still killing each other."

Her eyes no longer functioning, Pale could only rely on her ear to find her way, but she still splendidly found where I was and turn to me.

Selena noticed us staring at each other and couldn't help but worry as she alternately looked between me and her.

"We'll be allies from now on. I still don't understand you very well, but I hope we can get along. Though I have heard a little about you from Selena," I said.

Pale vaguely smiled as she put down her cup and stood up.

"I'd like to feel the winds for a bit," she said.

I watched her back leave as she walked away.

—232 days until the battle with the humans.



Rashka's level has risen.

67 => 76

CHAPTER 140

BANQUET II

Status	
Race	Goblin
Level	71
Class	King; Ruler
Possessed Skills	Ruler of the Demon Children of Chaos; Defiant Soul; World Devouring Howl; Sword Mastery A-; Dominator; King's Soul; Ruler's Wisdom III; Household of the Gods; One-Eyed Snake's Evil Eye; The King's Dance at the Edge of Death; Magic Manipulation; Soul of the Berserk King; Third Impact (The Third Chant); Warrior's Instinct; Blessing of the Underworld Goddess; Guided One
Divine Protection	Goddess of the Underworld (Altesia)
Attributes	Darkness; Death
Subordinate Beasts	High Kobold Hasu (Lv77); Gastra (Lv20); Cynthia (Lv1); Orc King (Bui) (Lv82)
Abnormal Status	Blessing of the One-Eyed Snake; Protection of the Twin-Headed Snake

I turned my back on the banquet and followed after Pale.

The trees grew denser along the way, gradually obscuring the light of the festivities. On the other end of the branches were the twin red moons shining brightly up in the night sky.

“...Can’t hold your liquor?” I asked.

Pale waited for me in an open space within the dense trees, basking in the light of the twin red moons.

“It would be improper to say something I don’t believe to be true,” she said.

The light of the moons reflected off the naked sword in her hands, and then the night winds blew a breeze, lifting the veil that was her golden hair from her face.

Her eyes were shut tight, but true to her fame as a valiant warrior, she could tell where I was.

“Still want to defeat me and restore the elves?” I asked.

“Not at all... It’s just that my knees are too stiff to bend to a monster,” she said slowly and harshly.

But I could feel the strength behind her words as she raised up her sword.

“Consider this the second round. Let’s fight, Goblin King!” She declared, then her figure vanished.

Relying on my senses, I swung my great sword and sparks flashed above me.

There was about a 10m distance between me and her original position, yet she managed to close that in an instant.

“!?” It seems she didn’t expect me to block that attack, as she ended up revealing her position and taking my attack, though it was reflexive on my part.

Pale stifled her shrieks as her posture broke, but I wasn’t about to watch her recover. I swung my great sword with enough strength to split even blue-silver steel in two.

But Pale desperately tried to fend off that attack, causing her sword to bounce up her head, leaving herself wide open. I took advantage of that and swung my great sword at her weapon, effectively disarming her.

Though her eyes remained shut, she looked at me with indignation as I pointed my sword at her neck.

“...Why, won’t, you, kill, me?” Pale asked in ragged breaths.

Sheathing my sword, I answered. “There was no killing intent in your sword. If you want to kill me, you should come at me more seriously.”

As Pale bit her lips, I continued. “Why do you want to die? I’m sure you understand that your death can’t break this alliance. This alliance was set in stone the moment we won the war.”

I was certain she already understood that; if not, then it must be because she doesn’t want to think about it.

“So you’ve already seen through everything...” Pale said with self-derision as she fell to the ground. Her body trembled as she looked up at me.

“I... hate you. Why is someone like you with the goblins? You are strong... So strong that it’s terrifying,” Pale said bitterly.

As she spoke, I noticed that the shaman, Gi Za Zakuend, was hiding above me.

I wryly smiled. *Truly a worrywart.*

“One day, if you keep going like this... you will surely hurt my friends. You are a destroyer of peace,” Pale said.

“Peace? Don’t make me laugh, Pale Symphoria,” I said.

If she thinks there is peace now, then she is horribly mistaken.

“The humans gloat their supremacy and drive the other races to the borders. Yet now they seek to take even those very borders they drove them to. Such a world created by violence is not what you call peace, Pale Symphoria.”

There is no peace. Shure’s map proved that.

Demihumans, monsters, beasts, and barbarians alike are driven to the distant borders, away from the mainland. This world is inhabited by many nations and races, each possessing a different will than the other, each fighting for domination.

In such a world where different races war with each other, could the humans’ path to supremacy possibly remain unobstructed?

—No!

Everyone is putting their lives on the line to expand their domain, waiting patiently for the right moment to jump at each other. Everyone is fighting! That's why I was so excited when I saw that map!

"Don't make fun of me. Are you saying... that you're going to destroy this world?" Pale asked.

"Remember, Pale. Was the human world you saw truly beautiful? Starvation, poverty, discrimination... People accused unjustly of crimes they did not commit; the marked difference between those with power and those without; a world where the law of the jungle reigned supreme. Is that not the true face of the human world?" I asked.

How could I share these feelings with this elven warrior?

"Stagnation is not peace. But if there is such a thing as peace, then... Come with me, Pale. With you and me together, we can create a peaceful world."

"That is nothing more than your hubris talking! Do you really think such a thing is possible?"

"If there is someone more fitting than I, then I will one day fall before his sword. At that time, you should kneel to that person. But until then, fight for me, Pale Symphoria!"

"Kneeling to a goblin is..."

At this time, I noticed voices approaching us. We did not have much time left so I said, "If you come with me, at the very least, I will be able to protect a single girl. Don't forget, Pale. That girl was cruelly enslaved by the humans."

"That's..."

"Pale!"

Pale was about to argue when Selena ran to her and embraced her.

As she embraced the kneeling Pale, she turned to me with tears in her eyes. "If Pale did something wrong, I'll apologize. So please! Please forgive her!"

“Don’t worry, she just tripped. The alcohol must’ve gotten to her,” I told Selena, then I turned to Pale. “Pale, consider it. Consider it well.”

In the end, the one to make this decision was none other than she herself.



When I came back to the banquet, Shure looked sharply at me, but I ignored him and ate some meat. After a while, Pale came back with Selena.

Shure calmed down when he saw her safe.

It wouldn’t hurt to be a bit more trusting. I wryly smiled.

When I had emptied my blue-silver steel cup of liquor, Gi Za came along with some meat and asked in hushed voice, “Why do you favor her so, Your Majesty?”

I’m sure he didn’t want others to hear his question, but his sharp gaze was irritating.

“...Who is our enemy?” I asked.

“The humans,” he replied.

“Exactly. Now, what do we need to defeat them? I have been pondering the answer to this question since the ceasefire,” I said.

“Soldiers,” Gi Za replied. “If we just had enough soldiers, we would surely be able to overcome them.”

“Indeed, if this were the same enemy as last time, that would be the case. But as it turns out, the humans are a much bigger prey than previously thought. The country we’re facing is known as Germion. They outnumber us one-hundred men to one, at least. I can’t even imagine how many humans that is.”

I wasn’t exaggerating; their numbers were indeed unimaginable.

“...Is that why you favor the elves?”

“Yes, I want them for their management skills.”

The entire human race might be our enemy, but it would still be better to lessen the actual soldiers that we fight. But the problem doesn't end with the war. After we defeat the soldiers, we need to think of a way on how to manage the remaining multitude whose number will surely be greater than ours.

One of the answers I came up with was to create an organization made up of my retainers.

By using the few to rule the majority, we will be able to rule over the humans. But we will need to rule over them efficiently; hence, it would be difficult to rule with only the goblins. That's where the other races come in: the elves and the demihumans.

I will rule at the top, while the goblins handle the military and the elves handle the civil offices. The demihumans will work as a bridge between us.

The goblins and the elves alone will surely end up in conflict due to our differences, so the demihumans are necessary to smoothen things.

"In other words, they are here to do things we cannot?" Gi Za said.

"The goblins will one day be able to accomplish these things as well, but that will take time," I said.

It's an issue to tackle if the goblins manage to prosper alongside the other races. I'm not that interested personally, but someone like Gi Za might be interested.

"If you've considered it that much, I won't say anymore," Gi Za said with a slight pout.

It seems I've managed to persuade him.

"Am I that unreliable?" I asked.

"Well you do make questionable decisions from time to time," he said.

Harsh. I wryly smiled.

"Anyway, from here on, we'll be able to focus our efforts in expanding our forces," I said.

Shure has promised me the elves' support after the war with the humans, so all that's left now is to increase our numbers, strengthen our ranks, and formulate a plan to defeat the humans.

If I could get Pale, I won't have so much trouble, but I doubt things would go so smoothly this time. She seems to believe in the humans a lot more than expected. It'll probably take some time for her to turn to my side.

"I've made a lot of debts with the humans. The coming war will surely be a joyful one."

It wouldn't be any fun otherwise.

They got one over us last time, so this time, we'll show them.

"What about you? Do you resent the humans?" I asked.

"It was indeed painful to lose the water mage, Gi Zo, but I've been raising some more juniors after him, so... No, I don't think I resent them."

He's not lying. It seems he's more reasonable than he is emotional.

Well, this is good. It wouldn't do to have him lead a horde if he hates the humans too much, so this is good news.



"Feeling better?" Felbi asked Pale after she came back.

Felbi loved to drink, so much so that he even drank boldly in battle. The cup he used to drink elven liquor might have been small, but he still emptied cup after cup, leaving Pale astounded.

"I see you're immune to alcohol as always," Pale said.

"That's Selena isn't it?" Felbi asked.

Selena's half-cut ears twitched when Felbi called out to her, and she stepped out from Pale's shadow to show her face. She looked just like a puppy, causing Felbi to guffaw.

"I'm not going to eat you. You're a respectable elf, after all."

Seeing Felbi suddenly change the topic made Pale start to think that he was actually drunk for once.

She took a seat with Selena and reassured her. "Don't worry, you can trust him."

Selena nodded to Pale and greeted Felbi. "My name is Selena. It's a pleasure to meet you."

"Name's Felbi. I'm currently working with the Goblin King," Felbi said, then he lined up his cups and started pouring wine again, only to frown upon realizing that his bottle was empty.

Fortunately, Selena had a bottle with her, which she offered to the man. "Please."

"Thank you," Felbi said. "It's only courteous to accept wine when given. Especially, when such a beauty is pouring it. It makes the taste that much better, right, Pale?"

"Selena is still a child," Pale reprimanded with a stiff and threatening voice, making Felbi laugh again.

It was then that a goblin approached Pale.

"Mr. Gi Jii," Selena said, causing Felbi to scratch his head.

Felbi was still incapable of telling the goblins apart, so seeing Selena easily do so showed just how much time she'd spent with them.

"Lord Pale Symphoria, yes?" Gi Jii asked with a stiff voice as if they were meeting on the battlefield, causing Selena to wince.

Pale patted her on the back to reassure her as she nodded to Gi Jii.

"Yes, that is correct," Pale said.

"I see," Gi Jii said as he took a seat across Pale and poured her a cup.

“My name is Gi Jii Yubu. I have suffered many defeats under your hand in the last war,” he said.

A sweet taste filled Pale’s mouth as she took a sip from the cup.

“I hear your eyes can’t open anymore,” Gi Jii bluntly asked despite it being a sensitive subject.

Pale wryly smiled. “It’s probably hopeless. My eyes have been treated with Symphoria’s secret medicine, so...”

“I see...” Gi Jii said, his voice growing fainter.

Pale couldn’t help but wonder why Gi Jii seemed affected by her disability.

“...Will you be leading again?” Gi Jii asked.

“That’s...” Pale wasn’t sure.

Gi Jii sighed. “Sorry, that was insensitive of me. Of course, you can’t lead. You can’t see, after all... You were strong and beautiful. I was elated to hear we might fight together, but it seems that’s impossible now.”

Gi Jii lifted his head and implored Pale to drink her half-empty cup.

“Forgive me. I didn’t come here to grumble. You fought brilliantly, that’s all I wanted to say. If an opportunity comes, I hope we can have a good talk.”

Though blinded, Pale could tell through her exceptional hearing that Gi Jii was indeed a goblin. Yet this goblin was actually talking politely to her. What kind of goblin was this?

“Why me? You have your king, don’t you?” Pale asked.

“My lord would indeed answer my questions if I asked, but his highness’ time is precious, I would not wish to delay him. Besides, his fighting style is different from mine.”

Glancing at the Goblin King, who was currently talking to Gi Za Zakuend, the shaman

whose cheeks were currently stuffed full of meat, Pale implored Gi Jii to continue.

“When I saw you lead the elves, I was astounded. You ordered your soldiers so masterfully it almost seemed like they were puppets on strings. Even now, the ideal commander I see in my head is that same commander I lost to countless times.”

“You praise me too much... I am only self-learned.”

“As I thought, you’re something else.”

As Pale and Gi Jii conversed over liquor, Felbi was sitting quietly in his seat, stupefied. *Damn! The goblin is actually courting her!*

“I knew it. Alcohol is magic,” Felbi said to himself as he somewhat cursed his own constitution.

When he noticed Selena watching anxiously as Pale and the goblin drank together, he patted her on the head. “Don’t worry. No matter how cold the winter, spring will come. But snow won’t thaw suddenly. When it happens, it will happen gradually.”

—231 days until the war with the humans.



Status	
Name	Felbi
Race	Sylph
Level	75
Class	Commander
Possessed Skills	Heaven-Sent Child of the Wind; Sword Mastery B+; Bow Mastery C+; Inspire; Magic Manipulation; Guidance of the Goddess of Knowledge; Forest Dweller
Divine Protection	Wind God
Attributes	Wind
Abnormal Status	Seven Duels Seven Losses
Status	Blessing of the Forest God

Heaven-Sent Child of the Wind

Can borrow the wind's power to increase movement speed.

Seven Defeats Seven Losses

Bound to obey after losing seven times.

Blessing of the Forest God

Can take advantage of the trees better than others when fighting inside a dense forest, increasing sword mastery and bow mastery rank.

CHAPTER 141

TO RICHES AND POWER

Now, where do I start? Just a few days ago, I was pitying Shure with all the paperwork he had to deal with, yet here I was now in the very same situation. How ironic.

After forming an alliance with the elves and the demihumans, I headed back to the Fortress of the Abyss.

The shaman, Gi Za Zakuend, and the other druids stayed behind with the elves to study, while Cynthia stayed with the gray wolves. Cynthia was already a splendid gray wolf. She would only be holding herself back if she continued to rely on me. I do miss her, though.

To some extent, a road has also been built connecting the Goblin Base with the elves, greatly shortening travel time.

It was a magnificent sight as roughly 200 goblins, elves, koro dwarves, and a human marched back to the fortress.

Along the way, the newly evolved rare goblins were in charge of procuring food, while I distributed the new normal and rare goblins to their respective platoons.

The assassin, Gi Ji Arsil, and the battle demon, Gi Jii Yubu, both refused to receive a territory. Because of that I had to come up with another way to compensate them.

Receiving a territory meant that one also received a bigger army as well as the responsibility of taking care of the land. Of course, it was always emphasized as a reward, but regardless, since they refuse to accept, then I have to find another way to bestow them those same responsibilities.

“I’ll have the soldiers under Gi Ji Arsil’s direct control be in charge of reconnaissance. I’ll bolster his unit with more men from the base.”

I decided to confer to him 100 goblins.

Once he trains all 100 goblins, we will have a small but elite scouting unit.

“As for Gi Jii Yubu, I’ll have him train the goblins at the fortress alongside Gi Ga Rax.”

The newly born goblins are currently being trained by the knight-class goblin, Gi Ga Rax, in the way of the spear. But while the goblins are getting stronger physically, there is much to be desired when it comes to their heads. Their training is insufficient.

I’ll have Gi Jii fill that gap.

I asked Hal if he wanted a family name after evolving to a noble, but he declined, saying, “To wield Paradua’s spear in loyalty to the king is my pride. Master Aluhaliha would surely reprimand me of greed if I were to ask for more.”

I could only nod to his humility.

The tribal goblins had their own land, so they weren’t very keen on receiving a new name. It wouldn’t do to force the issue.

“A splendid attitude. Keep it up,” I said.

“As you will,” Hal said.

We dropped by the demihuman villages along the way, and when we finally returned to the fortress, it had taken us a total of 11 days from the elven region.

“Welcome home, Your Majesty!”

“My liege, we have been awaiting your arrival!”

Kuzan and Gi Ga Rax welcomed me as soon as I arrived.

“I’m back. I’ve troubled you much in my absence,” I told them, then I turned to Kuzan. “We have new people with us, can you assign them a place to stay, Kuzan?”

“Please leave it to me,” Kuzan said as she hopped with that small body of hers.

“Gi Ga Rax, you have worked hard in my absence,” I said.

“No, I still have much to learn. Forgive me for my inability, My Liege,” he said, kneeling.

Patting him on the soldiers, I said. “It was a duty no one could take but you. Gi Ga Rax, be proud!”

“As you will... Thank you,” he said.

After that I headed to the throne, where the goblins, starting with Gi Ga and the nobles, then the rares, knelt before me.



The goddess sat on her throne as she peeped through her magic mirror. A pure white toga covered her four limbs. She looked bewitchingly beautiful as she sat there with her lustrous skin that was the envy of any woman.

“It went about as expected,” she said.

“Gawayn’s messenger has completed his task as well,” a one-eyed red snake said.

“Did the wind god say anything?”

“He didn’t seem very interested with the spirits. Then again, he has always done as he pleased.”

The goddess laughed. “Pitiful. Try as he might to feign madness and draw his master’s attention, in the end, no one cares about him.”

“...Master,” the one-eyed red snake said when he saw the goddess looking to the distance with sadness in her eyes.

She was probably thinking back to how she was in the past.

“And?” The goddess asked. “What of the spirit?”

The wind god had many dependents, each one uninhibited and whimsical, but most notable of all was their great numbers. Hence, the wind god did not care even when one of them went mad.

“Gawayn’s disciple has calmed down, but it’s only a matter of time before he truly goes mad.”

“I see.”

“If you would permit it, there is a person skilled in reading the wind under him. How about influencing that person?” The one-eyed red snake looked at the mirror, whereupon a goblin sat in his throne. “It would be a great boon to us should we succeed.”

“Interesting,” the goddess said. “Could someone capable of subduing the spirits appear beside him? It’s something worth trying out.”

“As you will.”

In the elven village, a black biting louse appeared before Gi Za Zakuend.



As soon as I came back, I took a look at our current numbers and started assigning work by class. After the war, everything will depend on how efficient we will be able to manage the humans.

When the newly born goblins in the fortress are added to the goblin that went on the expedition, we get a total of 380 warrior goblins.

There are currently 140 females and 50 goblins that are either too young to fight or unable to for some other reason.

The goblins aren’t born at a fixed rate; rather, the rate of reproduction is ever increasing.

A horde of over 500 goblins. Keeping a horde of that size fed is no trifle task.

The goblins might be fine eating even the bones of beasts, but it won’t be long before hunting alone will become insufficient for us.

This food problem needs to be dealt with as soon as possible.

It is for that that I asked Shure to send us the demihumans from Jirad. Previously, he came to me to discuss the matter regarding Jirad's farms. It was then that I told him to give me the demihumans.

Neither the elves, the goblins, nor the demihumans originally had any knowledge on farming. In this forest abundant with food, the main livelihood of these three races was always hunting.

But when Nash Jirad realized that the humans might attack, he took the demihumans under him and began cultivating the land of a hidden forest within Jirad. Nash Jirad understood the method, but unfortunately, he wasn't willing to cooperate with us.

In that case, I will have to use the demihumans that worked under him and attempt to rediscover his methods. We'll be fumbling our way through, but hopefully, we make it in time. I don't even want to imagine a scenario where we end up fighting the humans because we ran out of food.

The leader of Jirad's demihumans, Carad, stayed behind in Jirad's hidden forest, while we borrowed some of Jirad's demihumans to help us cultivate our land.

When they investigated the land surrounding the Fortress, they demarcated it and cut down the trees, creating plots of land to use as fields. We used the lumber acquired to work on the fortress.

From the elves, the ones who came to the fortress were Fei, Felbi, Pale, Selena and 30 elven warriors who chose to follow them.

I asked them to make the fields while minimizing the changes to the forest.

"As I thought... There's not enough blessing. I can't use my power normally," Fei said.

"Just do what you can. I don't want the geography to be altered too much anyway," I said.

The farther the elves were from their forest, the weaker their ability to control plants and trees became.

Of course, the elves weren't willing to change the forest into fields at first, but when they saw for themselves how quickly the goblins reproduced, they understood the

gravity of the situation and decided to cooperate.

To the goblins, the forest itself was a kind of shield they used to protect themselves. We might be heading to a different stage now, but that doesn't mean we can change from one extreme to another just like that. Change that comes too fast was bound to recoil.

The normal gobs took on most of the work, though I also helped out while I exchanged opinions with the elves and the demihumans.

We began working as soon as we decided the kind of crop we would be planting, the area we would be using, and the route of the water. The scale was so grand that my eyes went spinning.

Everyone was a beginner, so there was no telling whether this would actually work or not, but that couldn't be helped. The only thing we could do was to make the best choices and proceed.

This whole thing reminds me of the humans, Mattis and Chinos, who were once with us in the village. If only we had some humans helping out, this whole thing would go much smoother.

Unfortunately, complaining is a fruitless task. All I can do now is to do what I can.



Aside from the food problem, we also had to deal with our defenses.

There was a lot of distance between the fortress and the borders of the forest, but that was not an uncrossable distance to the humans. Moreover, we also had to be wary of any assassins.

The kobolds and the orcs inhabit the area between the fortress and the forest's borders, so if a large enough army attacked, it will be easy to know. As long as they don't end up like last time, anyway. We'll need to ensure that doesn't happen again.

In this world, there exists people who can destroy an entire army singlehandedly. If such a person infiltrated the fortress and began slaughtering the female and the young, it's game over. The one advantage we have over the humans is our ability to

reproduce quickly.

To address that I called Kuzan over and had her move the females and the young to different rooms. So long as they weren't gathered in one basket, even in the worst case scenario, we should be able to mitigate our losses.

The fortress was only two stories high from the ground, but its basement was colossal. It was so big that even I didn't know how big it was, and perhaps, even Kuzan.

"Yes! Your Majesty!" Kuzan cheerfully replied.

I ordered her to take the Gordob and search the Fortress of the Abyss. Her tribe's home under the ground was connected to the fortress, so I picked them out for the search. Just in case, I ordered the recently evolved rare goblin, Gi Ah, to lead a platoon to accompany them.

"As the king commands," Gi Ah said.

Gi Ah led 30 normal goblins to accompany Kuzan and her people. This trip shouldn't be dangerous, but it was always better to be safe than sorry.

In the last battle, the orcs and the kobolds were rendered moot because of the humans' surprise attack. The small elite trampled them, then the human army came.

The surveillance network needs to be improved.

To that end, we will be setting up beacons for signal and reusing Gi Go's old cave as a base in the frontlines.

The next problem is the horde of over 500 goblins. They need to be divided into smaller groups, but who's going to lead?

Rare goblins aren't bad, but they might not be able to last under the stress of the work. That leaves only the noble goblins up. Gi Jii and Gi Ji have to work at the fortress, and Gi Ga is still working as my representative.

I'll have to get the tribes to help.

I summoned Ra Gilmi Fishiga and commanded him to take some soldiers to the

frontline base. The soldiers accompanying him were the beast warrior, Gi Bu, the water mage, Gi Ba, and 60 normal goblins. The same goblins that evolved during the battle with the humans.

I chose the hero of Ganra, Gilmi, to handle the frontline base and its beacon because he was the only one suitable, being a member of the Ganra Tribe, which was the most skilled among the goblins when it came to their hands. They could use bows and even craft their own tools.

Gilmi immediately understood my intentions when he heard my command.

Bowing his head, he said. "As the king commands, so shall I fulfill my duty."

"Ganra's peace lies upon your shoulders. Strive well!"

"As you will."



"You called, Your Majesty?"

"What a nice place. It's so dark."

Answering to my calls was the demihuman's representative, the harpy, Yushika. She had wings on her back and the feet of a bird. In her arms, she carried a bag. She stood out conspicuously in the dimly lit Fortress of the Abyss.

The other one that came was the sleepy-eyed papirsag who carried a mossy shell on his back, Luther.

"Well, it was a rare request from the chief of the winged-ones."

"You don't need to thank me. Our standing is the same as always. So long as there's something to profit, I'll do business with anyone."

Yushika seemed to know what I called her here for, as she bewitchingly smiled.

My request was to trade with the elves and the demihumans.

“And what will you give us in return?” Yushika asked.

“We will provide food and shelter for you along your trade routes,” I said.

Yushika smiled. “You’re serious?”

“Of course,” I said without a thought.

Yushika became thoughtful.

The scariest thing to a merchant is to lose their trade. What I want from them is their ability to move goods quickly by flight.

The creation of shelters along their trade route would allow them a place to rest. They might be able to fly, but they can’t fly forever. From time to time, they need to take a breather and sleep. Sometimes, they need to stop because of the weather, and other times it’s because they were attacked by some beast.

My offer to her is protection.

I have the goblins under my rule and an alliance with the elves and the demihumans. This gives me the ability to position my men along the villages and the roads to ensure her safety. Just having a place to run doesn’t guarantee one safety, after all.

This request is also in preparation of the war, as this deals with the issue of goods and supplies.

It would be problematic, after all, if we ran out of supplies away from the forest. To avoid that, we need her power as a merchant.

“...The winged ones are deeply grateful to the king,” Yushika said with an alluring smile.

I turned to Luther. “I also wish to enlist the Papirsag, who are said to be skilled in woodcrafts. I want you to create me a ‘traveler’s inn’.”

“I’ll happily undertake anything for the sake of the community.”

No matter how well the goblins are at cutting down trees, only the Ganra are able to

work with them, but the Ganra Tribe currently have their hands full setting up the frontline base.

In other words, I don't have enough men.

Because of that I decided to ask Luther of the shell tribe to make the inns, in which I will be stationing my men. They will both act as guards of the inn and as scouts to monitor the other races' movements.

It is imperative that I keep tabs on the demihumans' and elves' movements.

We may be allied today, but there's no telling how long that will last.

Right now, we goblins are dominating, so they choose to be servile. However, should we lose our advantage during the war with the humans, there's no telling whether they'll betray me or not. At the very least, the possibility can't be denied.

Because of that I need to station my troops throughout the region, ensuring that they stay a step beneath me.

"Gi Be, I command you to escort the descendants of the crystals. Protect them well," I said.

"As you will," he replied.

The one-armed Gi Be and the other injured goblins trained under Gi Ga. Though these goblins have lost a body part or two, these goblins are extremely loyal to me. I sent half of them to guard and monitor the other regions.

The goblins with the Man-Eating Snake skill weren't pleased to see that they wouldn't be partaking in the war with the humans, but there was still some time until the war. Until then, I need to increase our forces as much as possible.

215 days until the war with the humans.

CHAPTER 142

A CHALLENGE TO ECONOMY

“How can we make goblins understand the concept of economy?”

When I asked that question, the smartest of those under my banner scratched their head.

From the elves, representing Shure, were Fei and Felbi.

From the goblins were the old goblin; the battle demon, Gi Jii; and the knight class, Gi Ga Rax.

From the demihumans, the mud-shelled tribe (tarpidae), Fanfan; and the man-bull tribe (minotaur), Kerodotos.

From the humans, Shumea.

“Goblin King, I think it would be better to give it up,” Fanfan said.

“I would prefer if you tried thinking about it first though,” I said.

Felbi scratched his head. “I think it’ll be difficult. I mean, to begin with, they don’t even understand the concept of bartering, right?”

“Well, yes,” I agreed.

“Your Majesty, what is this ‘economy’ you speak of?” Gi Jii asked, causing the other goblins to turn to me as well.

Stop looking at me with those resigned eyes.

“How do we go about this?” Fei started politely explaining. “Alright, for example, Gi Jii, let’s say there was a spear you wanted. To obtain it, you asked a koro dwarf to make it for you. But that koro dwarf can’t make it without food... Do you follow?”

Gi Jii, Gi Ga, and the old goblin looked at each other and then nodded.

“More or less,” Gi Jii said.

Fei heaved a sigh of relief.

“So, in other words, we should prepare some food?” Gi Ga asked.

“Yes, but if the koro dwarf wants something else, you must provide that instead,” Fei said.

“...Mu, mumu? Why?” Gi Ga asked.

Fei turned to me with pleading eyes.

“In other words, you say what you want~ and I say what I want~ and we exchange!” The minotaur, Kerodotos, said in that ever slow fashion of his.

“What if we don’t have what the other party wants?” The old goblin asked.

Kerodotos answered. “Then there’s no deaaaaaal~”

“Then what if our respective offers don’t match? For example, one side wants a double-head while the other wants a bundle of herbs?” Gi Jii asked.

“That certainly doesn’t add up!” Gi Ga angrily nodded.

“Then you should rejeeeeeect~” Kedorotos said.

“In other words, if we don’t like the deal, we refuse?” Gi Jii asked, and Kedorotos nodded.

The three goblins were bewildered, but they somehow managed to grasp the concept of trade.

“My king, what is the point of discussing this?” Gi Ga Rax asked.

“It is something you need to understand before we can continue,” I said.

Among the different races, the humans can be said to have developed their economy the furthest. In fact, according to Shumea, most of humanity has already adopted currency. It was such that bartering could rarely be seen – if ever- even in mid-sized cities.

Small villages still bartered, but there was no doubting how advance humanity's economy was.

Goblins need to understand currency if they are to rule over the humans.

They need to understand humans.

I won't ask them to be painters or artists, but at the very least, they need to understand the reason humans fight, the secret behind their strength, and the areas where they are ahead.

By knowing one's enemy, there is a chance that one might just find a weakness.

It is not good to be ignorant... Though the pursuit of knowledge is never easy. Especially, in our case, it seems.

"From now on, I want you to gradually teach the goblins starting with the rare class about economy," I said.

"As the king commands," Gi Ga Rax said as he bowed with the others.

Hopefully, they'll be able to understand currency as well.



We took the koro dwarves from the defeated villages of Jirad, Sinfall, Symphoria, and Sheng to our headquarters because of various reasons.

One reason was because I was hoping to emulate some of the elves' technologies at our headquarters. The koro dwarves knew which ores to pick and how to process them. Compared to them, the goblins don't even know which ore can be processed into iron.

If the goblins could at least learn to distinguish the ores, we would be able to increase

the mining rate of these resources, allowing us to produce more equipment.

The second reason is to allow them to exchange pointers on technology with Ganra. Perhaps even the demihumans could join them. By doing so, I hope to encourage the goblins and the demihumans in their endeavors.

Sharper swords, multi-purpose spears, and light yet strong armor.

We need to better our equipment to increase the survival rate of our warriors. To that end, I need to borrow the strength of the koro dwarves.

The elves may be safe within their territory inside the forest, but of the three races in our alliance, the goblins are the furthest and closest to the humans.

We can't allow the humans to reach our headquarters.



I spread the map I received from Shure.

It's a map we got from the elves, so the goblin headquarters was dotted on it a little too far to the east.

To the north were the continuous mountain ranges, at the center were the forests, and to the right were endless plains dotted with forests. Down to the south were the deserts, then the sea, beyond which were a group of islands. Finally, to the west could be seen plains, beyond which was the distant continent.

The mountain ranges of the snow god to the north, home to the humans who live with the snow. They have almost never encroached into the forest, so they aren't enemies, but they aren't allies either.

I thought back to my conversation with Shure as I traced the map.

The southern deserts, the great desert of Ashunasan, the god of the desert. Inhabiting these lands are a paltry group of humans and those who live in the desert. These people have never invaded our lands either.

Though not as vast as the east, the western plains are quite extensive themselves.

Beyond the western plains is a sea, at the end of which is the distant continent.

There are forests dotting the plains. There might be other sylphs living there.

The salamanders live in a corner of the volcanic region to the west, while the undine live in the water capital to the east.

The gnomes live in the mountain ranges to the north. They seem to live in between our home and the human territory.

The greatest threat, the human kingdom of Germion, lies directly east of the Fortress of the Abyss. From there, going north leads to the mountain ranges of the snow god, going south leads near the boundary of the desert, going west leads to the Forest of Darkness, and going east leads to the Holy Shushunu Kingdom.

According to Gi Ji Arsil, the humans have built a stone wall at the border of the forest. I wonder how big it is.

Regardless, I have a good idea what they're aiming for.

They probably intend to create a base from which they could attack. I know because I've thought of the same plan. Create an offensive base, supply it with men and resources, and use that as a point to stage attacks. Unfortunately, I'm not very fond of being on the receiving end of my idea.

Still, this... Let's call it a fortress city. I wonder just how big it is. I doubt they could possibly be so big as to encompass the entire border of the forest.

The main idea should be to surround the capital and attack from there, but... As I thought, I need to find out just how big it is.

"Gi Ji Arsil, I appoint you on a special mission. Work with the orcs and find out how big the fortress city of the humans is. I want to know the scope of the walls and their height, but you are only allowed to look at them from afar. You must absolutely not try to infiltrate it."

"As you will."

Gi Jii called out to the goblins under him and headed East.

There's no actual reason to recklessly attack this fortress city. Though it also depends on what kind of country the humans have, if it's an organization that's capable of creating something as complex as that fortress city, then it should be enough to get rid of the head. The fortress can be ignored so long as I'm able to take the head of the western feudal lord.

Having all powers gathered onto a single person allows an organization to move efficiently, but it also means that if that person were to vanish, everything would come crumbling down.

I'm only guessing, but on top of the western feudal lord, their kingdom has probably given out lands to various feudal lords to manage and defend much in the same way as the goblins operate.

Though it depends on how close the feudal lord is with the king, the feudal lords must have some degree of independence. We'll aim for that.

That leaves the next question: How much of a threat do you the humans see the goblins as?

If they see us as a threat on the national level, they will hit hard the moment we leave the forest. That would be troublesome.

There's far too much information that needs to be gathered before the war.

Not to mention, I have yet to get word of the goblins I'd sent out before too. Gi Gu Verbena to the south, Gi Gi Orudo to the north, and Gi Zu Ruo to the southwest.

They could have at least sent a messenger in this past six months.



"Orc King, we'll be in your care for a while."

This blue goblin bowing before... If I recall correctly, this is Mr. Gi Jii.

Behind him were nearly 100 goblins gathered.

“Wow...”

I think that was Gui’s voice coming from somewhere. There’s a hint of resignation mixed in, but I understand his feelings. After all, I feel the same way too. Still... he could be more discreet.

I know, I know.

I don’t have to turn around to know the orcs are all looking at me, asking what we’re going to do.

“Welcome,” I said. “How long will you be staying?”

“The king ordered us to grasp the scale of the human fortress. We will be returning as soon as we finish our mission,” Gi Jii said.

“Is that so? Well, I don’t think you’ll be staying long then,” I said.

“Most likely,” Gi Jii replied.

I’m relieved to know they won’t be staying long, but do we have to prepare food for all of them? I’d prefer it if they left sooner. There are things I don’t want them to see...

The goblins will be going once nightfall comes, so they slept as soon as they ate.

It sure feels weird seeing goblins sleep next to orcs though.

While the small green goblins slept, Mr. Gi Jii spoke with me.

“Orc King, how are your plans to make those small villages going? Are they proceeding well?” Gi Jii asked.

Come to think of it, Mr. Gi Jii was around when I started the first village. He seems to be asking purely out of interest, but I should consider this the same as informing that scary goblin.

How should I answer?

“Everything is going well. The orcs have increased in number, and the enemies from

outside are also being kept at bay,” I said

“That’s good to hear,” Gi Jii nodded.

He wasn’t probing for information; he was simply and honestly glad at our success.

“But of course, it’s not without a hitch. The defense around the new branches are weaker compared to here, and there’s also the issue with the water...”

The other villages are too far, so Doralia’s blessing can’t reach them. The other plants’ influence were still too strong, so I took some of her seedlings and planted them, but they’re going to take a while to grow.

“What’s wrong with the water?” Gi Jii asked.

“It’s hard to find drinkable water...”

Hmm... Gi Jii scratched his head.

“Bui! Big problem!”

It was then that Gui came running, panicked.

“The paddock has been attacked!”

The two meanings behind that sentence almost made me faint.

—209 days until the war with the humans.

CHAPTER 143

THE EXPECTATIONS OF THE STRONG

The paddock.

That is something we orcs came up with to ensure our continued sustenance.

We demarcate an area and build a fence around it, then we fill that area with relatively weak herbivores, giving them free rein to graze and multiply. Once they multiply, we eat the excess, giving ourselves a delicious treat while ensuring that we never ran out of food. But that's not all. From time to time, other beasts would attack them, which we would of course have to deal with. In this way, we are able to eat not just the delicious meat of our captured beasts but also the meat of the foolish predators.

Doralia herself is quite fond of the beasts as they would eventually become nutrients for her.

Lately, I've been crushing the bones of the beasts before burying them by her roots. She was happiest that way, as it made it easier to absorb the nutrients.

The paddock is something I thought up with Doralia, then created in northern area of the village, away from the goblins' eyes and ears.

And yet! What is with this timing!?

I tried pulling the wool over Mr. Gi Jii, but he seemed deep in thought.

Maybe he'll keep quiet if I coax him. I have to do something or else my dream will remain but a dream! Oh, how cruel the goddess of wisdom is!

"Bui, what are we going to do!?" Gui asked.

"Gather the soldiers!" I said. "Who attacked!?"

"Wanderers! Those wanderers coming from the north!" Gui said.

Before I knew it, I had my head in my hands. As far as I knew, orcs rarely gathered in large numbers. There also shouldn't have been any big groups nearby.

There's a lot of reasons why we orcs don't gather in large numbers, like food problems or territorial problems, but regardless what the reasons were, it was indeed a rarity for orcs to gather together in a large group. The one exception being when a strong leader like Master Gol Gol was present.

Lately, a change has been happening to the northern area. For some reason I can't comprehend – maybe they were attacked by beasts and chased out of their land or something – but regardless, some orc groups have been appearing at our territory for awhile now.

"Their numbers?" I asked.

"15 orcs!" Gui said.

"Beat them! But don't kill them!" I said.

"Of course!" Gui said.

Then I turned to Mr. Gi Jii. "Mr. Gi Jii, you'll have to excuse me. In the meanwhile, please have a good rest."

"No, let me help," he said.

Oh no no no no no! You can't! You'll find out about the paddock! The northern orcs don't know anything about the fearsomeness of the goblins here, so they won't surrender easily!

"I-It's fine! Look, it's just 15 orcs! Even we can handle that much!"

"You took care of me before. Let me use this opportunity to show you my gratitude," Gi Jii said.

What a heavy good will.

I don't need such good will! I mean, I'm happy, but show it some other time! For example, when I find myself in a pinch with that black goblin!

At this moment, the goddess of wisdom's smiling face flashed through my mind.

"Besides, didn't the king give you an important job? It wouldn't do your king well if you dallied around while doing his very important mission, right?"

A troubled expression appeared on Mr. Gi Jii's face.

"Mu... You have a point. I have to do my best for the king."

T-Thank goodness I somehow managed to convince him.

"But..." Gi Jii began to say, but I cut him before he could say a word more.

"We're really alright! Now, if you'll excuse me!"

I left Mr. Gi Jii in an almost fleeing fashion and made my way to the paddock.

By the time I arrived, the foreign orcs have already been surrounded and were being jeered at by Gui and the others.

"Whose lands do you think these are, you bastards!?"

"I'll send you lot to hell, I will!"

"You'll pay for every thing you've eaten!"

Yep, they're scary alright.

The 15 foreign orcs had already taken out their weapons. I wonder whether I should actually call out to them at times like these, but... There are goblins at the village, so I think it would be best to settle this as soon as possible.

"Gui!" I called out.

"Ah, Bui, you came," Gui said, causing the orcs to all turn to me.

"General! General!" The orcs cried.

“Show them who’s boss, General!” Another said.

The normal orcs stomped their feet on the ground and cheered, causing the foreign orcs within their encirclement to falter. Looking closer, they could be seen sitting on their knees in seiza.

“Beat them up!” A goblin cried.

“Master Bui, embrace me!” Another said.

I feel like I heard something weird just now, but ignoring it, I approached the 15 foreign orcs.

You can do this, Bui. Don’t get nervous.

“I would like to apologize for this incident,” the leader of the foreign orcs said as he apologized.

Well, yeah, there’s not much else you can do when surrounded by a horde three times your size.

They have also been insulted for a while now, so it was only natural that they appeared weakened. In fact, they looked like they were about to cry anytime.

Personally, I’d prefer to just forgive them and forget, but that wouldn’t do. The orcs are far too impulsive. If you let them off lightly, it won’t be long before they do it again.

To avoid that, one needs to be hard and stern. If this whole thing could become a traumatic experience for them, even better. Otherwise, they’ll never listen. Especially, these warrior-type wanderers.

As I kept quiet, the surrounding orcs became even rowdier.

“How are you going to make up for this!? Are you going to feed us with your flesh!? Hah!?”

For the record, we don’t engage in cannibalism.

“But, the beasts in the north were going crazy—” The orc leader complained.

“Like we care! Pay us back for the food you stole!” The other orcs from my side demanded.

At that, the foreign orc leader’s presence became smaller and smaller until he seemed barely visible.

Just as I was thinking it was about time to wrap things up, suddenly, a shadow appeared behind the orcs sitting in seiza.

T-That’s...

“Orcs, meat,” the shadow said.

It was Hasu and his men, a fierce flame gleaming from their eyes. There were about over 70 of them all-in-all.

“K-Kobolds!?” The foreign orcs cried.

“Ahh, those... those are our general’s pets, scary pets that eat bad orcs—” The orcs from my side said.

“Let’s hear your reply,” I interjected, cutting off the previous orc.

This is bad! Mr. Hasu looks so hungry he seems about ready to pounce at any moment. I’ll be fine, but they might mistake the baby orcs for food.

To quickly wrap things, I said, “I give you two choices: One, you work in this village, or two...”

I pointed to the kobolds.

The foreign orc leader immediately replied with tearful eyes. “Master Bui, please let us serve you!”

Seeing that, I signaled Gui with my eyes.

Give meat to the kobolds!

Gui nodded in response, then he took the foreign orcs and instructed them to rebuild the broken paddock.

We have to catch the animals that escaped too.

As my head started to ache at all the problems, I headed back to the village where Mr. Gi Jii was waiting.



When Gi Jii Arsil came back with his men, he reported his findings. I listened with folded arms.

Stone walls greater than my height that stretched endlessly around the forest; and it didn't even take Gi Jii a half-day's worth of walking to reach it. That distance is a problem. It would probably be best to assume these walls to be the real deal too.

The lack of a system of measurement is a problem. I should've decided on one beforehand.

Can I still make it if I start teaching the goblins now?

Even I can only eyeball distances myself. How should I even explain what 1 meter is to them? What about numbers?

Goblins starting from rare class can count. From 1 to 10, then there's 100. Above that there's 1,000, and then there's 10,000. I should teach distance in a similar fashion.

Gi Jii managed to count up to 100 before, but he couldn't count any further.

If I use footsteps as a base, I should be able to teach the goblins about distance.

After teaching Gi Jii, I sent him out to scout again. I could go myself, but if I'm always the one doing things, I might end up hindering the goblins' growth.

Because of the upcoming war with the humans, the quality of the goblins has become an urgent issue. Because of that it would be better for me to use the goblins or even the demihumans to carry out tasks with little to no danger to them to train them.

Just physical strength and ether alone won't be enough to win a war.

Those walls the humans came up with has already gone beyond my expectations. We've taken our first steps in this war against them, but they're still far ahead of us.

To grab them by the shoulder, turn them around, and beat them black and blue... is still a long way away.

Still...

"A paddock, huh."

Apparently, Gi Jii caught wind of the orcs building one when he dropped by. It's a good idea, I think.

Catch the relatively tame herbivores and raise them up to be – perhaps – even better than their wild counterparts, that might be aiming too high. In any case, just raising them up for food isn't a bad idea.

I should consult the beast tamers, Luther of the papirsag (shell tribe), and Gi Gi Orudo the ancient beast tamer, when they come back. For the meantime, I should send the most knowledgeable of them, Luther, to look for beasts we could put in our paddock.



"The castle walls have finally taken shape," a calm voice said, causing the head of the carpenters to turn around.

When he did, an elderly gentleman with silver hair and combed down silver mustache filled his vision.

As soon as he saw him, the head carpenter said, "My lord!"

The fat man was about to begin buttering up to the old veteran, but a glance and a wave was all it took Gowen to stop him.

"Enough," he said. "How is the construction proceeding?"

"Y-Yes, we've mostly completed the outer walls. The walls are 4m thick and the people

can pass above the walls with no problem. As you've requested, we've installed paths throughout the facility and stocked up on spears and bows..."

Gowen looked around the castle walls as he listened to the man.

Last time they lost to the goblins. With the darkness and the forest at their side, the goblins were able to thoroughly destroy half of his army.

Gowen had spent a long time in the army, but even for him, suffering so much in the hands of the goblins was a first.

But that was precisely why he couldn't let down his guard.

The goblins they were facing were not normal. A goblin humanity has never seen before was with them. If that was truly a king class, then it was truly regrettable that he could not subjugate it that day. How strong would the goblins be in a few years? Gowen couldn't tell.

"Can't let my guard down," Gowen muttered.

"Yes...?" The head carpenter asked.

Gowen implored him to continue, then he looked up at the castle walls again and pondered.

These walls were quickly finished thanks to the magicians the king asked, and it was between these walls that the war would be held.

But if these walls were to fall... What then?

Gowen shook the impossible thought from his mind. If such a thing was indeed possible, he would have to think up a plan to counter it.

Beyond the walls were the fields, then beyond that were the very innards of this colonial city. There were gates on the western and eastern walls, leading to the western capital by road. From there, it would take about 2 days on horse.

If this place were to fall, the enemy would surely come to the western capital through those roads.

In the windy empty plains, there was no way to stop an invasion coming from the west.

Should he try fortifying the two roads? But he had no men to spare aside from those fresh recruits. There was strength in number, but enlisting too many civilians would negatively affect the tax. That would displease King Ashtal, making it an unwise plan.

What about the adventurers? It was unfortunate, but he had to restrict them for now. As much as possible, Gowen did not wish to stir the hornet's nest until he was sure he was ready.

But the outer walls were ready, weren't they? If so, then shouldn't it be fine now? Uncertain factors should certainly be kept away from the equation, but...

In that case, he should take the cowardly soldiers and attack the monsters through the plains.

A map appeared within Gowen's mind as he thought back to all the battles until now. He considered making a protective wall between the different districts of the city. He figured he should also prepare to call reinforcements from the western capital should the goblins manage to break through.

"Umm... Is there any problem, my lord?" The head carpenter fearfully asked.

"No, it's nothing. I will take a look around the walls. You may return to your post."

"Y-yes, my lord!"

As the head carpenter withdrew, Gowen walked up the walls and looked at the passages the soldiers would be passing through in case of a war.

Winds blew from the mountain ranges of the snow god, fluttering Gowen's clothes. As memories of the distant battlefield drew a smile on the old veteran's face, he muttered to himself, "I'll teach you goblins what it means to fight a war."

The western feudal lord glared at the forest, then turned heel and never looked back.

—199 days until the war with the humans.

CHAPTER 144

TIME TO RETURN

“Well then...”

A white robed man gave King Ashtal a letter, and he glanced it, then nodded and handed it over to his prime minister.

“So this is the formula for potion,” the old prime minister said with great interest.

The messenger nodded. He was a young man with a tall and lean figure, but though he wore a slovenly smile on his face, his eyes were not smiling. “Please consider this as one of the wisdoms of our ivory tower. With this formula you will be able to create as many of these potions as you like.”

The prime minister turned to the messenger. “This can instantly heal wounds?”

The messenger met his gaze. “That would be praising it too much. This potion can only increase the regenerative abilities of people. It is not magic. If you need instant healing, a magician would be preferable. In fact, lately, I’ve heard that there are skilled healers here in the country that could be hired for a large sum.”

The messenger’s sharp gaze turned to King Ashtal as well, but being king, it could not affect him.

King Ashtal smiled and chuckled. “Interesting, our country would be very interested to adopt it. Right, prime minister?”

“...Of course, Your Highness,” the prime minister agreed.

Bloody tanuki, the messenger cursed in his mind, but his smile remained unwavering.

“Now, about Lady Reshia’s return. Will one month be acceptable?” The messenger asked.

“Yes, that’ll be fine. Thanks to her holiness, the city has gotten much livelier. I am

cannot overstate my gratitude to the Ivory Tower.”

“No, no, surely, this must also be a gift from the heaven’s because of his highness’ great virtue,” the messenger said as he excused himself.

“Hmph, shrewd mutt. I suppose this means they’ve seen through our intentions?” King Ashtal spat.

“We really can’t look down on them. They don’t just have influence among the bureaucrats, their intel is also superb. Your Majesty, are you truly going to hand over the saint?” The prime minister asked.

Ashtal reluctantly nodded as he leaned onto his armrest. “It can’t be helped. There’s no point in having a trump card if you never use it. It’s good timing, though. Gulland should be coming back for his regular report soon. We can have one last feast then.”

The prime minister courteously nodded and faintly smiled. “I shall send a letter to the merchants and nobles then. The saint needs to dance one last time for us, after all.”

“I’ll leave it to you then,” King Ashtal said.

At that, the prime minister withdrew, leaving King Ashtal by himself.

Reshia’s return to the Ivory Tower. They have been discussing through the Ivory Tower’s messengers for some time now, and finally, the day has come where they would have to hand her over. As far as King Ashtal was concerned, that so-called saint was only a girl. Exactly what was her worth?

King Ashtal did not know, but one thing was certain: the Ivory Tower wanted her safe.

“Well, whatever,” he muttered.

So long as he could get what he wants.

The formula for potion. With that in their possession, King Ashtal could strengthen his army even further. With the potions and the healers together, King Ashtal’s personal army would truly become a force to be reckoned with.

“I need to whittle down the nobles’ influence and strengthen my own... My royal family

must become stronger.”

Suddenly, knocking could be heard from the other side of his office’s door.

“Your Majesty, it is Ishtel. May I request an audience?”

“I don’t mind. Enter.”

The person that entered was a young man with a great figure. If Ashtal were younger and better trained he would look just like him.

“Grandfather!”

No sooner than the imperial guards closed the door, Ishtel ran up to Ashtal.

“Are you truly going to send Lady Reshia away?” He asked.

Ashtal wryly smiled when he saw his grandson so excited. This boy was still wet in the ears, but he was King Ashtal’s sole heir.

As King Ashtal felt the warm of his would be successor, he made a stern face. “That was the plan from the start. She could only stay here temporarily. We can’t refuse the Ivory Tower’s messenger if he asks us to send her back.”

“That’s... That’s true, but...”

“Ishtel, I understand you are fond of the saint, but...”

“E-Excuse me!? I... I couldn’t possibly...”

Not even Ashtal could keep up appearances when he saw his grandson react like that.

“Ah, Ishtel, you are kind, so kind... But that kindness is something you must share equally among our people, to do otherwise is to betray our duty as kings.”

One may love, but never indulge. One may hate, but never diverge. Those are the teachings of the Germion Family that have been passed down since long ago.

“20 days later, a feast to send her off will be held. You must bid her farewell then.”

“...Yes, grandfather.”

The young prince came with great vigor, but when he left, he left with none.

“All sources of trouble shall be cut, be they from within or from outside,” King Ashtal said.

He would see to it than when he passes on his royalty to his grandchildren, it would be a peaceful one. To that end, he would have to quickly dispose of the goblins festering in the west.



“The lizardmen are on a rampage?” I asked.

The assassin, Gi Ji Arsil, had personally trained an intelligence division. One of those goblins reported before me with tottering words. Apparently, the lizardmen from around the river to the north were on a rampage and have even caused casualties among the goblins.

“Your Majesty, please give us the command to subjugate them.” The knight class, Gi Ga Rax, enthusiastically said, but I remained quiet.

I wonder if there’s a way to add these lizard men to my horde? They are beasts that live by the riverside, but they’re not incapable of reason. If I could add them to my horde, that would add another point to my favor in the coming war with the humans.

“Before killing, we should try talking. Summon Tanita of the long-tailed tribe,” I said.

At that, a messenger was sent to the distant demihuman village. Until then, the area where the lizardmen were rampaging was to be off-limits.

If talking doesn’t work, then we’ll kill them.

Next was a report from Kuzan.

It was about her investigation’s progress.

In the end, it seems they couldn't figure out how far the path underground extended. I listened to Kuzan's report with a frown.

I don't think there are any dangerous beasts down there, but... An endless path, huh? A large path that stretches horizontally and vertically. It seems I'll have to send more people if we are to search both ways.

The small Kuzan looked pitiful as she sighed.

According to Kuzan, the legend passed down among the goblins says that this place is the entrance to the underworld that the underworld goddess herself had sealed. But that's all we know.

I ordered Kuzan, who was feeling down, to prioritize the search in the first level.

"As you will, Your Majesty!"

This search's purpose is mainly to find out whether there are other entrances to the basement or not. There could be a path leading to the human world, after all. While it's true that we could simply leave the forest the normal way, having just one path out would limit our options. Besides, why go the normal way and do as the humans expect?

That aside, I can't settle down for some reason.

The days have been passing with me receiving reports and sanctioning new orders. It seems I've built up stress because of that. It seems a goblin's body really does need to move from time to time.

Because of that I decided to take a peek at Gi Ga and Gi Jii's training.

Taking my great sword with me, I got off my throne and headed to the plaza, where the normal goblins trained.

"My lord," Gi Jii said.

"Your Majesty," Gi Ga said.

Gi Ga trained the young goblins to become warriors, while Gi Jii trained the warriors

to become soldiers.

Gi Jii's training would start with three-man cells, then Gi Jii would put several three-man cells to form one unit, a kentor. After that, he would put several kentors together to form one unit, a regioli.

The rare-class goblins were the ones who usually led the kentors, while the noble goblins led the regioli.

Apparently, this was something Gi Jii figured out after consulting with Pale, a method to make the army operate faster.

"If that's how you're going to do it, then you might as well name them all," I said.

"Name them?" Gi Ga asked with wide eyes.

"For example, the Yubu Regiol," I said.

"I see... Then, by all means, my lord. Please pick out some names," Gi Jii said.

Huh, me!?

Gi Jii looked at me with curious eyes. I know I was the one who suggested it, but...

"Hmm, let's pick out names when everyone has returned," I said.

"...Very well, my lord. Let's do that then," Gi Jii said, somewhat dejectedly.

What was he expecting?

Like this, the days passed with happiness and satisfaction. The fact that we were steadily progressing toward our goal filled me with satisfaction, and I was able to get a good night's rest.

I■, saw.....■Ah, —Saw.....

Voices of jubilation that I should have forgotten long ago resounded within my ears, though to me, they were really nothing more than something to hate.

The distant memories of my humanity that I've already forgotten surfaced a little and then vanished again.

Was I really once human?

Maybe I was always a goblin, and these memories are nothing more than a clutch I used to explain these incomprehensible and vague knowledge I was born with?

In truth, I—

—In the darkness, I opened my eyes.

“Gu, ...”

In front of me was the ceiling of the Fortress of the Abyss that I should have long gotten used to.

Wiping my sweat with my damp hands, I shook my head.

“I am the king. I am he who shall become the king of monsters...”

Nothing more, nothing less...

At least, that's how it should be.



“It's been a while, Lady Reshia.”

When Reshia heard that familiar voice, she turned around with Gastra in her arms.

“Lord Rolika? What are you doing here?”

What would an acquaintance from the Ivory Tower be doing here? Reshia wondered, though her emotionless expression never broke.

The tall and lean figure that was Lord Rolika courteously bowed. “At the whims of the white elders, I have been tasked with escorting you back.”

“...Isn’t that saying too much?” Reshia frowned in a way that made it hard to understand her expression.

In response, Rolika continued to smile that slovenly smile of his, while his eyes never did. “Oh? And here I thought it was a splendid answer. As usual, it is difficult to understand you.”

Rolika looked at her in a way that was akin to someone observing a test subject, a cold, emotionless gaze, though his smile never left his lips. It was unnerving to say the least.

“The ‘whim’ part was a joke, but I really was tasked to escort you back. Lady Reshia, please return to the Ivory Tower. Everyone is worried about you.”

“...Worried about my seal?”

“Oh? Oho oho? You’ve become a lot easier to understand than before. Such a childish response is disappointing to hear. That simply won’t do, lady Reshia. You must be more complicated...”

As Rolika mumbled, he suddenly appeared before Reshia without a sound and grabbed Reshia by the arm.

Sensing Reshia’s apprehension, Gastra began growling, but Rolika looked into Reshia’s eyes all the same as if nothing was amiss.

“Was it the great hero, Gulland, who changed you? Or was there someone in this kingdom that managed to move your heart?”

The tall Rolika looked at her from above, his slit for eyes opening, revealing an ecstatic expression. It was a crazed expression no one would expect from the usually composed Rolika.

Marked desire twisted Rolika’s face.

“Aren’t you simply misunderstanding?” Reshia asked.

Rolika looked at her eyes for a moment, and after ascertaining that her eyes were unwavering, he shook his head and his expression went back to normal.

“Hmm, that’s odd... Maybe it’s because you were always locked in here with no one to talk to, so you’ve become worse at talking.”

Rolika Ralmera, the clairvoyant, a researcher student at the Ivory Tower.

“...And? When will I be departing?” Reshia asked.

“One month later. You’ll have to endure then. Do take care not to lose heart.”

“I understand,” Reshia said in a dismissive way.

Rolika complacently smiled back and withdrew, and Reshia held Gastra tightly.

“I’ve changed...”

Gastra meekly cried out of worry for his master.

“If that is true, then...”

It could only mean that she has seen he who will fight fate. His body was that of a monster’s, but his will was greater than any other’s; a will so great it would not tremble even before the gods themselves.

To the followers of fate, there was nothing more fearful than his existence.

Through the will of the gods, the paths have been laid out. From the moment of birth, to the moment of death, everything was decided long ago. That is the correct order of the world.

But the king did not fail to reach her in time because of fate. That result was not due to fate but her own cowardice.

Something like that isn’t fate!

If the gods have chosen a path, then it is only human to go against it.

She has always been pondering to herself, but now that Rolika has appeared, she knew what she had to do.

“Let’s go back... to the Ivory Tower.”

—192 days until the war with the humans.

INTERMISSION

GI GI'S BEAST HORDE 2

Status	
Name	Gi Gi Orudo
Race	Goblin
Level	35
Class	Noble
Possessed Skills	Track; Throw Projectile; Axe Mastery C-; Sloppy Eater; Jeer; Tacit Understanding; Ancient Beast Tamer; Beast Trainer; Cooperation; Friend of the Horde; Bug Eater
Divine Protection	None
Attributes	None
Tamed Beasts	Triple Head

After leading a great horde of beasts and capturing a village, the ancient beast tamer, Gi Gi Orudo, looked at the surrounding beasts and sighed.

“Woof?” The thorn dog, a dog-like beast with thorn-like fur, was puzzled to see Gi Gi feeling down. It was small for a male, but it had three large females for its wives and had many children rolling around by its legs.

“Guego!” The big eye, a bird with richly colored feathers arranged in a way that drew the shape of an eye, sang a courting song to cheer Gi Gi up.

That courting song attracted the male big eye, causing it to spread its wings and begin dancing.

The mirage, a monkey that could blend with its surroundings, jumped up, wondering what was going on, but when it saw that it was just the big eye, it went back to sleep with its wife.

The thorn fox’s thorn-like fur stood up for a moment when the thorn fox thought there was danger, but when it noticed that the everything was fine, it looked toward Gi Gi

with its wife.

The young dragon turtle was only about 1m big at the moment, but it is said that their kind could eventually grow up to 5m. The dragon turtle's children were resting upon its shell, so to keep from waking them up, it didn't even move an inch and only looked at Gi Gi.

"Why..."

After occupying the goblin village, Gi Gi finally managed to get some help in taking care of his beasts, greatly lessening his work, but for some reason, no woman would approach him.

There were certainly female goblins within the village and it was not like he had any problems finding a female companion back in the Gi Village.

Gi Gi wasn't a fool; he knew very well why no one approached him.

The reason why he muttered out that 'why' just now was not because he did not understand his predicament but because he had no way of solving it.

Being surrounded by such a terrifying horde, it was no wonder that even the goblin females were too terrified to approach him. And Gi Gi himself was too proud, being a goblin noble, to actually force a woman to be with him.

Goblin women were supposed to approach the men on their own accord. At the very least, that's what Gi Gi believed.

Why did he have to be the one to approach them? Gi Gi thought to himself as he sighed again.

But it was also true that there was no fulfillment in being buried by beast's feathers like this.

Gi Gi Orudo had been spending his days, looking for new beasts to add to his horde, procuring food to feed them, and studying the nearby terrain, yet all the while he was being anguished.

Each time he went to scout, his beasts would follow him out of love.

They would follow their beloved master wherever he went, be it the cruel battlefield, the fiery volcanic region, or the beaches and its salty air, the one exception being the marshlands.

Gi Gi was worrying endlessly as he thought of his next course of action.

The order he had received from the king was to strengthen the goblins.

When he thought about it, it seemed he was given plenty of freedom to do as he pleased. With nothing to do, he had driven away the orcs, added the beasts he liked to his horde, and he even taught the goblins of this village how to take care of the beasts and fight together as three-man cells.

Gi Gi has also had many plants planted in the area to ensure that his horde of beasts was well fed.

But these things were not enough to console Gi Gi.

What Gi Gi truly wanted was to go back to the village. As soon as he realized that, it didn't take him long to resolve himself to return.

"Since I have decided, I should hurry," Gi Gi said.

The moment he decided to return to the Fortress of the Abyss, he acted.

"We are going to the headquarters!" Gi Gi declared after gathering the goblins of the village.

The goblins looked at each other while the thorn dogs howled, calling their brethren to them.

They started preparing to return the very next day. The scale of the gathered beast horde was nothing to scoff at.

Aside from the beasts that were usually with him: the thorn dogs, the mirages, the thorn foxes, the big eyes, and the dragon turtles; there were also the birdcats who were unsuited for war, the moles that fed on soil, the earth crabfishes that would use their scissor arms to cut grassroots before eating them, the stone crabs that would

mimic stones when threatened, and the feather rabbits that would quickly run using their wings.

“Unu...”

Even Gi Gi was taken aback when he saw the great horde gathering before him, but when he thought about it, that just meant that his horde had gotten that much stronger.

Suddenly, Gi Gi felt happy about himself, as it seemed he would be able to give a good report to the king.

3 days after Gi Gi had announced that they would be returning, they started to make their way to the Fortress of the Abyss.

As Gi Gi led the horde on the back of his triple head, a long line of beasts could be seen following from behind.

Within that long line of beasts were a relatively paltry number of goblins pulling the beasts. To these goblins, Gi Gi’s orders were absolute, so they did not hesitate to carry out this great migration.

The goblins piled up what little treasure they had on the backs of the dragon turtles as they headed south. As they made their way, they found the southern lands to be a peaceful land with no powerful beasts to threaten them.

From time to time, they would happen across some spear deer or some giant spiders, but aside from those, there were no beasts worthy of note.

But then suddenly, their march came to a halt.

Gi Gi had ordered them to stop.

“Was there a cave in a place like this?” Gi Gi asked to the rare class goblin who was the former boss of the village.

“Well...” the goblin didn’t seem to know.

“Hmm... There’s a smell coming from inside that has me curious,” Gi Gi said.

“It feels like we’re being invited,” the rare class goblin said, causing Gi Gi to think it wiser to back off, but then sounds of footsteps approached from the cave.

“Is someone there?” Gi Gi asked as he ordered the triple head to back off.

Then a voice called out from the direction of the cave. “Long time no see, Gi Gi.”

It was a familiar voice, causing Gi Gi to blink. “That voice... Lord Gi Go Amatsuki!?”

Gi Go Amatsuki, the goblin swordsman who asked to be exiled. He looked different from before. His once blue skin was now brown, and a lone horn stretched for the heavens from his forehead. He was also much bigger than Gi Gi recalled.

“...You’ve gotten stronger?” Gi Gi asked.

“Yes, as the king has shown,” Gi Go said.

“Mr. Gi Go, I keep telling you not to leave... Woah!?”

The pressure emanating from Gi Go, who had his arms folded, was so great it caused the beasts behind Gi Gi to shake. As Gi Go and Gi Gi were talking, Yoshu finally came out of the cave and was understandably shocked to see Gi Gi’s horde.

“That’s quite a horde you have there,” Gi Go said.

“You’ve changed a lot too, Lord Gi Go. If you are planning on returning, how about coming with us?” Gi Gi offered.

“Unfortunately, I have yet to accomplish my goal. You’ll have to forgive me.”

“I see...”

After thinking for a while, Gi Gi decided to hand Gi Go a bag full of plant seeds and the evening primrose he found in the marshlands a while ago.

“I don’t know if these will be of some use to you, but I gathered a lot of edible seeds to feed my beast horde. I think that human with you might be able to put these to good use. Please take it.”

Gi Go considered it for awhile, then he gladly accepted.

“Thank you, but are you sure?” He asked.

“I have this beast horde to give to the king, so this is all I can give to you,” Gi Gi said.

“You’re a good man,” Gi Go said.

They exchanged a few more words after that, then Gi Go Amatsuki and Gi Gi Orudo parted ways. Gi Go headed north, while Gi Gi headed back to the Fortress of the Abyss.

“It seems I will be able to bring good news to his highness,” Gi Gi Orudo happily smiled as he kicked his triple head and rode back home.



Gi Gi’s level has risen.

36 => 40

Author’s Note: Gi Go’s evolution will be talked about in his chapter.

CHAPTER 145

GI GI'S RETURN

"Hmm... I guess it really was too much to expect things to go well the first time," I said with folded arms at the scenery before me.

We cultivated the land around the Fortress of the Abyss and tried planting some Praya (red fruit seed), but the end result was that all the crops died.

Just three days after we planted the seed, the seeds already started to bud, so I was pretty hopeful, but then five days later, everything died.

"Do you know the cause?" I asked the fearful demihuman inspector, at which he answered timidly that he did not know.

"I see," I said.

I don't know anything about farming in this world, so I can't give any advice, but at the very least, we should try figure out what factors caused this failure.

"In any case, let's go one step at a time and try to figure out what factor caused this time's failure," I said.

"Factor?" The demihuman asked.

"Yes. Perhaps it was the soil that caused the seeds to die, perhaps it was the lack of nutrients, perhaps it was water, or perhaps it was the climate. What matters most now is that we find which one or which ones are responsible for this failure."

"I see..."

"I'll leave the rest to you."

At that, I left the demihuman and received the report of the goblins I'd sent out to scout the lizardmen. As it turns out, the lizardmen have gotten even rowdier.

It seems it was worth summoning Tanita, after all.

“Gi Ga Rax! Gather the young goblins and lead them!” I ordered.

“As you command!”

The moment Tanita arrived, I had the young goblins come with us as we accompanied the rizalat to the rampaging lizardmen. Of course, the reason the young goblins were with us was to give them experience.

When I was a young goblin, I had to search for my own food. They should be able to handle this much. Also, to be safe, I had the ‘injured’ goblins accompany the loyal Gi Ga.

We weren’t in any rush, so along the way, we took the opportunity to teach the young goblins how to hunt.

“I can smell the scent of our brethren. This...” Tanita said before becoming speechless.

“The lake seems to have changed,” I said.

“Hmm... I do recall it being a bit bigger than this,” Gi Ga Rax agreed.

The water pouring from upstream must have lessened. If not, well, something must have caused the water of the lake to lessen.

“—GUGIaa!”

Suddenly, a piercing shriek erupted and several lizardman jumped out of the mud and crawled toward us.

I took the young goblins and hid them behind me, while Gi Ga Rax and the injured goblins stepped out.

“Ruu—, uRURUuu—, Ru, Ru—!”

But then Tanita suddenly made some strange noises, and then his two heads glanced alternatively between us and the lizardmen, keeping us from fighting.

“Your Majesty...” Gi Ga called out.

I told him to stand alert.

Tanita seemed to be in the middle of persuading them. In that case, as the ones who invited him, we have the duty to see this through the end.

“At least, so long as the young ones aren’t hurt,” I told Gi Ga before turning my eyes back to Tanita.

Should negotiations fail, we have more than enough to wipe them out.

The twin-headed double-tailed chief of the long tailed tribe looked straight at the mud-smeared lizardmen.

“I hail from the west, I am the chief of the household of mud and rain. Bring out your chief,” Tanita said quietly but authoritatively.

The lizardmen could only look at each other in response, however. After a while, Tanita’s right head finally lost its patience and yelled. “Short tailed ones, I am telling you that we cannot talk unless your chief comes!”

In his anger, Tanita’s two tails slammed on the ground, frightening the lizardmen back into the lake. Tanita’s glare never left them as they swam away.

After a while, a conspicuously bigger lizard man crawled out of the lake. When he saw Tanita, he fell on his knees and bowed his head.

“...Warrior of hardened skin, brave warrior of two tails, it is my honor to meet you. I am Biddo, child of the large tail, Deddo.”

The lizardman, who proclaimed himself as Biddo, placed his curved sword and shield on the ground as he bowed to Tanita. The other lizardmen followed suit and knelt.

I breathed a sigh of relief upon seeing that they could be reasoned with.

“Child of the large tail, Deddo, Biddo, it is a pleasure to meet you. Do you know why I’ve come?” Tanita asked.

"I am uncertain," Biddo said, glancing at us then bowing again. "I find it doubtful that the great warrior, Lord Tanita, could have come because of the goblins."

Doubtful, huh. I wryly smiled.

"...Child of the large tail, Deddo, Biddo... Presently, the goblins are like the body of the god of fire that chases after the night god."

"Surely, you jest. They are goblins. Nothing more, nothing less."

The lizardman looked toward us again.

"I swear on my two tails, I speak the truth," Tanita said.

Immediately, a look of shock was painted on Biddo's face, and the lizardmen behind him looked at each other.

"I have come here today at their request to mediate between you and them," Tanita said.

Biddo was frozen still, but Tanita continued.

"Will you accept the decision we have made?" Tanita asked.

"I... will accept the decision of the famed twin-head double-tailed Lord Tanita, but... I must first see for myself, with my own eyes, the truth! I would like to challenge the goblins to a duel!"

Tanita breathed out in resignation and looked toward me.

Normally, this would be the queue for me to enter, but the young goblins were here, so I figured it would be a good opportunity to have Gi Ga show off.

"Gi Ga Rax!" I called out.

"Yes, Your Majesty!" He said.

"My faithful knight, first spearman of the goblins! Can you win against that warrior?" I asked.

“If it is his highness’ command, then by all means!”

“Then go!”

“I have received his majesty’s command.”

And so, Gi Ga Rax rode with dignity on blacktigerback to face the lizardman chief.

With a great voice, he bellowed out. “I am Gi Ga Rax! First of the king’s subordinates, first among the goblins in the art of the spear. Your courage to see our strength is admirable! Come as you please!”

In response the lizardman stepped forward and bellowed back. “You can talk, goblin! My name is Biddo! Child of the large tail, Deddo, Biddo!”

Wielding a large curved sword and a round shield, Biddo swung his blade overhead and pointed at Gi Ga.

“The gods oversee all duels, let there be no ill will no matter the result. I, the twin-headed double-tailed Tanita, shall be your referee,” Tanita said.

“Just as I wished!” Biddo said.

“Of course!” Gi Ga said.

The moment the word ‘Start’ resounded, Gi Ga and Biddo’s fight began.

Sparks erupted as Gi Ga’s spear met Biddo’s curved sword. The reach advantage belonged to Gi Ga’s iron spear, but the lizardman was so skilled he could bridge that gap with ease. A powerful foe.

After clashing weapons 8 times, Gi Ga took some distance. He has gotten much better at handling his steed. I might be biased, but I feel his riding is good enough to stand with the best of Paradua.

Gi Ga’s masterful riding coupled with his exceptional spear techniques left Biddo with no opportunity to strike back. Gradually, Biddo’s breath grew ragged, but Gi Ga was as calm as ever as he waited for an opening.

The difference in strength was steadily becoming apparent.

“Take this!”

Gi Ga swung his spear with his long arm, then bolting off with his steed, he rushed toward the lizardman. Everything happened so quickly that Biddo couldn't respond in time, the most he could do was to bring back his sword in hopes of defending, but unfortunately for him, Gi Ga's spear landed so heavily on his sword that he was forced to retreat. Gi Ga would not let him, however.

Without even stopping to breathe, Gi Ga let loose three thrusts toward the lizardman. The lizardman somehow managed to block them, but his form was clearly about to break.

Gi Ga let loose one last attack.

The tip of his spear cut Biddo's legs, causing him to lose his momentum, and in the next moment, Gi Ga sent Biddo's curved sword flying.

“Gu, Nu...” Biddo groaned as Gi Ga pointed his spear at him.

The lizardmen stood frozen still as they watched their chief lose.

“The duel is decided!” Tanita declared as he waved his hands.

After that, the lizardmen agreed not to attack the goblins any more and I invited Biddo to visit the Fortress of the Abyss, so we can deepen our relations. Like this we managed to stabilize the area near the fortress.

I asked Biddo why the water level of the lake had suddenly plummeted, and apparently, this happens once a year, after which, a fierce winter would follow. When I heard that, I learned for the first time that this world has seasons.

Gradually, the seasons changed, and the god of time's changing countenance charmed me.

Beyond this winter, what awaits us is the war with the humans.

I must gather enough strength by then.



The ancient beast tamer, Gi Gi Orudo, had at long last returned from his trip to the north with a great horde of beasts. We almost ended up fighting with the goblins he brought, but fortunately, Gi Ga managed to name himself before anything happened.

“Welcome back,” I said, my great sword in hand.

Gi Gi bowed. Behind him was a small horde of goblins and an uncountable beast horde. Never in my wildest dreams did I think he would come back with a great horde of beasts.

Well, I can add them to the army, all the same.

Rewarding and punishing is one of the basics of building a country, so I had to reward Gi Gi for a job well done.

“Gi Gi Orudo, the ancient beast tamer, I hereby permit you to build your village northwest of the Fortress of the Abyss. Take your fellow beast tamers with you and build a village there.”

“As his majesty wills!”

After seeing him nod, I informed him of the earlier events.

“When the war with the humans begin, I shall leave one front of the war with you. Train your beast tamers and your beasts with that purpose in mind. You have done well, Gi Gi Orudo.”

“My deepest thanks, Your Majesty!”

Gi Gi seemed nervous to be commended in front of the goblins.

There was still time until the war with the humans. If he raised his beasts well and trained up his rare beast tamers, Gi Gi’s horde should become a force to be reckoned with.

That's something I'll be looking forward to.

Still... It sure is surprising to see so many different beasts together in one place without fighting. I guess that in and of itself is a testament to Gi Gi's skill.

I'll have to give him a fitting land, so that he'll be able to spread his wings to their fullest.

Speaking of which, since he brought this many beasts back with him, I wonder if this'll have some sort of effect on the ecosystem of the north? After all, he didn't just bring herbivores back with him, he even brought back carnivores like the thorn dogs.

If anything, it would be more surprising if the ecosystem of the north doesn't get affected. Just to be safe, I should have Gi Ji send some scouts to monitor the north.

Now, with Gi Gi back, I wonder how Gi Gu Verbena and the others are doing.

I hope they're doing well...



After the sylph unification war, the elves were busy repairing their villages. Starting with the burned forest of Sinfall, the elves buried their dead and gathered the weapons and armor made of blue silver steel to prevent them from negatively affecting the forest.

They also mended their relationship with the demihumans, improving the lifestyle of the demihumans that were turned into slaves. Because of all these, the new chief of the sage's council, Shure Forni, had a mountain of documents sitting on his desk.

"Here are the population for the different villages," Fei said as he handed over a document.

Shure glanced over at that document, and then imposed work according to the population of each village. The demihumans were unconditionally released from their slavery, so voices of complaints rose from the defeated villages. Warriors had to be sent out to quell them.

"You sure are in high spirits," Old Falun, Shure's sworn friend and teacher, said.

“Well, the elderly did retire too early,” Shure sarcastically said.

Falun laughed. “Don’t you know? A man should work hard while he’s yet young.”

Shure sighed as he took a sip from the herb tea Fei had made for him.

“Anyway, I came because of those goblins you sent me,” Falun said.

“Is there a problem?” Shure asked.

The two shaman goblins, Gi Za Zakuend and Gi Do Buruga, had stayed behind in the elven village because they wanted to study. Presently, they were being taught how to read and write by Falun in the great village of Gastair to the west.

“Oh, no, none at all. I am a teacher, after all. Regardless what race a person comes from, if they want to learn, I’ll happily oblige,” Falun said.

“I thought you didn’t like homeworks?” Shure asked.

“Well, yes, I’d rather hand out homeworks than have homeworks handed to me,” Falun said in a roundabout way, causing Shure to smile.

When Shure remembered the past, he couldn’t help but wryly smile. The fact that he could wryly smile like that just went to show how long it had been.

“Anyway, Shure,” Falun said, causing Shure to raise his brows.

He was familiar with Falun’s ways, being his sworn friend and student, so he knew that when Falun acted like this, he was up to no good. At the very least, it wasn’t something that could be considered ‘good’ as far as Shure was concerned.

“I was thinking of reviving the old school house,” Falun said.

There used to be an elven school, but the lack of funds forced it to close. Now, Falun was saying that he wanted it brought back.

They certainly had more funds at present. After all, the hidden treasures of Jirad were all being brought to light because of all the arguments on who exactly was to blame

for the elves' defeat.

Bringing back the school was certainly possible.

"The foundation of a country is education. I have always believed this, Shure," Falun said.

The higher the educational standard, the more efficient the management of the country. Now that the elves were unified, it was only right that they took this as an opportunity to raise up the standards of education.

The powerful race of goblins to the east have already started to prosper, and their growth shows no signs of halting. The coming war between them and the humans would surely propel them even further.

What of the elves then?

Should they throw their lot with the humans and wipe out the goblins from the face of the world?

Or should they throw their lot with the goblins and defeat the humans?

Or should they pick neither side and look for their own path? Or perhaps pick both and remain in either race's good graces?

They were currently allied with the goblins, but it remained to be seen whether the goblins could be trusted. If the Goblin King were to die, how would the goblins react? What would they do?

The current alliance was something that was being held together solely by the friendship between Shure and the Goblin King.

"...The one to decide is you, Shure, but no matter which path you choose, you will need strength," Falun said.

"Your words ring true, elder," Shure said.

Whichever side he picked, he would need to gather the elves' strength.

At the same time, he would need to ensure that he makes allies.

That is to say that he needed to raise people with similar values.

One method to go about things was to share their knowledge and values with the intellectual among the goblins, and then send them back as skilled bureaucrats to the goblins.

The elven school was once a great village itself, but it was mainly a system to teach the children of the chiefs of the small villages a peaceful mindset.

When Shure thought of it, that was certainly a clever method. By studying together and instilling similar values, they would be able to carry out a so-called 'peaceful attack'.

"Good plan," Shure said.

Falun happily nodded. "I'll leave the details to you then."

"...Huh?" Shure thought he misheard for a moment, but when he turned to Falun, the old elf was gone.

"...He got me," Shure said as he stifled the unspeakable expletives that demanded to gush out of his mouth.

Shure started working on the documents at his desk again.

A good night's sleep was a long way away.

—185 days until the war with the humans.

INTERMISSION

GI ZU'S DUEL RECORD II

Status	
Name	Gi Zu Ruo
Race	Goblin
Level	15
Class	Noble
Possessed Skills	Overpowering Howl; Throw Projectile; Spear Mastery B-; Instant Kill; Mad Shishi; Bite
Divine Protection	Mad God
Attributes	None

The noble goblin that had a large wound extending from its shoulder to its chest grabbed another normal goblin and threw him at Gi Zu.

Gi Zu dodged the goblin even as spears were thrust at him, then – just as the name Mad Shishi implied – he forced his way through.

When the noble class goblin saw that, he threw another normal goblin at Gi Zu.

“The same trick won’t work again!” Gi Zu changed grips on his spear to a backhand and threw it at the normal goblin.

The spear flew through the air and collided with the goblin, piercing through it, dead.

With his spear gone, Gi Zu’s innate brutality and battle instincts finally showed their true colors.

Onwards!

Rusted sword, clubs, sharpened wood for spears... All sorts of weapon slammed into Gi Zu, but he was unrelenting. He charged single-mindedly forward.

“GURUuuOOAAA!”

The fire raging within seemed to have possessed Gi Zu, as even his small wounds started gushing out blood.

Dyed in red, Gi Zu took the head of the normal goblin blocking his way and crushed it, then he broke the arm of a rare class goblin and kicked him away.

A spear came thrusting for him, but Gi Zu slipped through it and bit the neck of another rare class goblin.

“Hii—”

Without even the time to cry, the throat of the rare class goblin was torn apart. The gushing blood bathed Gi Zu’s whole body in another layer of red as he smiled fiercely, his sharp fangs showing.

“Who else shall I bore my fangs into!?” Gi Zu provokingly said as he took a step forward.

After Gi Zu tore apart the neck of a rare class goblin with his fangs, he took the dismembered head of the goblin and threw it toward the noble goblin, who watched the whole thing dazed.

The noble goblin tried to sweep away the head, but then Gi Zu suddenly bolted for him with terrifying speed.

“Wh—”

“GURUuOOAA!”

With his howl, Gi Zu slammed his fist into the noble goblin, launching the goblin that was even bigger than Gi Zu himself a good distance away.

Yet Gi Zu did not stop.

“Pick yourself up and stand!” Gi Zu demanded. “Or are you going to make me beat someone while he’s lying on the ground!?”

Gi Zu ran toward the noble goblin and used his whole body's strength to slam his fist at the noble goblin as he tried to pick himself up.

Each time Gi Zu swung his fists, the face of the goblin changed and Gi Zu's bones broke, but Gi Zu never stopped beating the noble class goblin.

"GAH, GUAH, HII!"

It was a violence so bloodcurdling the surrounding area even appeared to become hazy. Gi Zu used his overwhelming strength to beat the noble class goblin senseless.

Because of the divine protection of the Mad God, Gi Zu would lose himself and stop feeling pain whenever he was bathed in the blood of his brethren.

"S, ave- please," the noble goblin tried to beg, but only an endless flurry of fists were there to answer him.

Gi Zu kept beating the noble class goblin until he lost consciousness. When he finally stopped, he looked around him. The goblins around no longer had the will to fight.

The only thing that reflected on their eyes now was the embodiment of violence that was Gi Zu.

The sight of Gi Zu suppressing his enemy with nothing more than his bare fists was so violent that it struck fear in the hearts of these goblins.

"Let it be known, from now on, this village belongs to I, Gi Zu Ruo. If there is any of you in disagreement, step forward!"

Gi Zu waved his blood stained hands at the surrounding goblins, but only prostrated heads and shrinking figures responded to his call. No one wished to fight anymore.



It was now the eighth day since Gi Zu had taken over the village of that noble goblin, and Gi Zu was not happy. Ever since that day, the noble class who was supposed to be Gi Zu's equal was so scared of him that he would always cower whenever they met. Meanwhile, the normal goblins would immediately prostrate themselves the moment Gi Zu made so much as an eek.

Gi Zu sat on the ground with his hand on his head and quietly complained to himself.

“This isn’t what I wanted...” He said.

He shouldn’t have let go of the spear.

It was unthinkable for Gi Ga’s number one disciple to let go of the spear. Because of that he even ended up fighting like a beast, just like he used to. No, in fact, he fought even more savagely than in the past.

“I can’t become like Lord Gi Ga like this.”

The mad shishi, Gi Zu Ruo, wanted to become like Gi Ga Rax, a goblin who was feared and respected. The goblins might fear him now, but no one respected him.

In the end, Gi Zu couldn’t come up with an answer. He had to continue his mission like this.

“Then again, I am not Lord Gi Ga.”

It was impossible to become him from the start.

“Hey,” Gi Zu called out to the noble goblin.

“Ah, yes,” the noble goblin said with his head lowered.

First, Gi Zu would give the goblins a name. He couldn’t possibly call them with ‘hey’ forever, could he? If he did that he would be putting the great king’s teachings to waste.

“I’m thinking of giving you a name,” Gi Zu said.

“A name? Is that edible?” The goblin asked, puzzled.

Gi Zu shook his head and reprimanded him. “To receive a name is to receive honor from the king.”

“Honor, you say,” the goblin said.

The goblin still didn't understand, so Gi Zu had no choice but to patiently explain.

"The king bestows a name upon us, and with it we receive things different from goblins without."

Gi Zu was not good at explaining. But that was a given, after all, he had always been the type to prefer action over words.

"In other words, by receiving a name, one receives honor, which allows one to eat more?" The goblin asked.

"Yes," Gi Zu nodded.

Gi Zu felt like something was off, but he wasn't wrong.

The noble goblin called out to his subordinates. "Hey, you bastards. Go thank pops! He's going to give us names! Receive it with gratitude!"

These goblins referred to Gi Zu as 'Pops'. Well, whatever, he thought. As long as they didn't call him king, anything was fine. He didn't really get it, though. After all, he wasn't exactly their parent, now was he?

It was probably their custom. Either way, Gi Zu didn't bother asking.

"I shall give you a part of the name that the king has given me. You shall be Zu Vet.""

"Hehe!" Zu Vet deeply bowed with satisfaction.

Gi Zu named the two remaining rare goblins as well. There used to be four, but Gi Zu killed two, so there were only two left.

"You shall be Zu Bi. You shall be Zu Bo," Gi Zu said.

The two rare class goblins danced to show their happiness.

"Uncle, I'm Zu Bi!"

"Uncle, I'm Zu Bo!"

Gi Zu watched the goblins dance with satisfaction, then he spoke to Zu Vet about his plans to conquer his next village.

“Vet, have you been gathering food?” Gi Zu asked.

“Yes, the three-man cell you taught us really helped. We should be able to gather the food soon...” Zu Vet said.

“I am not great, the king is,” Gi Zu corrected.

“I see. The king is great,” Zu Vet said.

Zu Vet didn't seem serious when he said that, but Gi Zu didn't blame him. After all, they had never met the king. It was only natural that they couldn't understand his greatness.

When Gi Zu came here, the most surprising thing he noted was the fact that the goblins were raising Noro Bison, a kind of livestock with long fur covering its whole body and two horns protruding from its head toward the sky.

“Those guys were caught by the guy who made the village. They're really convenient, so we figured we'd put them to use. Besides, they can be eaten too if the need shows itself,” Zu Vet said.

It seems it was the same goblin that left that scar on Vet.

“It's a pity that a warrior's life was lost,” Gi Zu said.

He was probably a skilled beast tamer, Gi Zu thought. He might have been able to get along with Lord Gi Gi.

“Really?” Zu Vet asked.

Gi Zu nodded, then he asked Zu Vet to have the nearby goblin villages scouted. Goblins sent out would sometimes not come back, but when he asked Zu Vet about it, he just said that it was normal.

“There are mindless giants (Gigantopitecus) and ogres nearby, and giant hammer cows (enboro) in the fields, so...” Zu Vet explained.

But Gi Zu had never heard those names before. “What are those?”

“Oh, right, you came from the north. The gigantopitecus is a monster twice my size. There’s no fighting it, only running,” Zu Vet said.

Zu Vet was already twice Gi Zu’s size, though he was still a little smaller than the king, he was undoubtedly big; if the gigantopitecus were twice his size, it would be a monster comparable to an ogre.

“As for ogre...” Zu Vet was about to say.

“That one I know. Our king hunted them,” Gi Zu said.

“Ho? Well, that’s something,” Zu Vet said.

Zu Vet couldn’t imagine a goblin ever hunting an ogre, but he didn’t dare doubt Gi Zu’s words. It wasn’t right to doubt someone he looked up to like a father.

“Indeed,” Gi Zu said. “What about that enboro?”

“The enboro live in the plains with axe-like horns... They’re fast and they’ll come chasing as soon as they spot us.”

“Hmm...”

Gi Zu folded his arms and considered which prey would please the king the most.

“Do you know where the gigantopitecus and the ogres live?” Gi Zu asked.

“...No, but they usually prowl the forest, so...” Zu Vet answered despite feeling something was off.

“Then I’ll challenge the enboro,” Gi Zu said.

“Pops! I won’t say anything bad, but it’s really dangerous!” Zu Vet pleaded.

“Nope! I’m doing it! How could I ever face the king if I left a strong prey alone!” Gi Zu proudly said.

Zu Vet could only watch, dumbfounded, as Gi Zu left.

“Is pops insane!?” Zu Vet asked.

But he couldn't leave him alone as his follower, even if he has been abandoned by his real parents.

“Hey, you bastards!”

Resolving himself, Vet stood up and called to the goblins of the village.

“Pops is hunting the enboro! We're going after him!”

The goblins cried as soon as the word 'enboro' got out, but he slapped them and forced them up, then he took the goblins and chased after Gi Zu.



In one of the plains that dotted the forest, where the winds blew against the tall grasses that reached up one's knees and the forest could no longer be seen...

“Pops, won't you reconsider it?” Zu Vet asked.

“Reconsider what? I'm challenging that thing, you just stay put and watch,” Gi Zu said stubbornly, causing Zu Vet to almost faint.

“So, which one is the enboro?” Gi Zu asked.

“That one... That big one,” Zu Vet said, pointing to a conspicuously big cow over 3 meters tall.

“That one, huh,” Gi Zu fiercely smiled in a way that revealed his fangs.

When Zu Vet and the others saw that, they couldn't help but twitch.

“You guys wait here. If I die, send a messenger to the north,” Gi Zu said.

“Pops!” Zu Vet cried.

“Tell the king that his warrior, Gi Zu Ruo, has died,” Gi Zu said, then he took his spear and ran toward the enboro.

Gi Zu had run with all his might and thrust his spear, but the most he could do was wound the legs of the enboro. The enboro had managed to dodge in time.

“BAGOOOAAA!” The enboro was filled with rage when it realized that its legs were wounded and it seized Gi Zu.

The pressure emanating from the enboro was nothing to scoff at, especially up close. Strong horns like hammers, a thick neck that supported them, and four sculpted limbs.

A smile appeared on Gi Zu’s lips as he challenged this worthy adversary.

“GURUOOOAAA!” Gi Zu bellowed out a howl that wouldn’t lose to the enboro, then dodging the enboro’s charge by a hair’s breadth, he struck his spear toward its legs. Unfortunately, even with the Mad Shishi bolstering his strength, it was no trifle task to hurt an enboro.

Gi Zu could only slowly whittle away at the strength of the enboro, so he needed to ensure that he kept his distance from the beast. Unfortunately, being a close-combat specialist, that meant that he could not fight with his best techniques, and the most he could do was to keep the enboro’s hammer-like horns at bay. But even then, he could only keep half of its attacks away, the rest still managed to make their way towards him. One slip up and Gi Zu could find himself in the grave.

2 hours passed as Gi Zu and the enboro danced on the edge of life and death, yet somehow somehow, Gi Zu managed to successfully defeat the enboro.

When the enboro fell to the ground, an earth shaking sound erupted, and Zu Vet and the rest of the goblins looked on dumbfounded, silence filling the area for a good second or two before cheers took its place.

Zu Vet and the rest of the goblins kept an eye out while Gi Zu finished off the immobile enboro.

After finishing off his prey, Gi Zu lost the last of his strength, and so, Zu Vet and the rest of the goblins had to drag him along with the enboro back to the village.



On the way back, Zu Vet never stopped praising Gi Zu.

“I always knew you could do it, Pops! Don’t let others tell you otherwise!” Zu Vet said.

This was how Zu Vet showed his happiness, it was his defining trait.

Zu Vet lent his shoulder to Gi Zu to help him walk.

The rare class goblins, Zu Bi and Zu Bo, were also happy

After all, they were able to subjugate an opponent they believed they could not win against.

But their happiness didn’t last, for not long after, the earth shook as a giant figure appeared before them.

With a height equaling that of the trees and a giant axe-like weapon and shield in its hands, that was none other than the gigantopitecus.

“...Gigantopitecus...” Zu Vet muttered in a daze, as Gi Zu looked up at that giant figure.

Eyes hidden by its long fur, a bare mouth in contrast, from which large fangs could be seen.

That giant looked down on the goblins. When it saw the dead enboro, its lips curved into a smile.

It was as if it didn’t even see the goblins as it took the corpse of the enboro.

The village goblins tried to pull back the enboro, but the gigantopitecus easily took it with one hand.

The resulting waves from its display of strength, knocked down some of the goblins, causing them to run away screaming.

“...Gu, that’s pop’s prey!” Zu Vet cried as he tried to chase after the gigantopitecus.

But Gi Zu stopped him.

“It’s fine,” Gi Zu said. “Prioritize the escape of the goblins.”

“Pops!” Zu Vet cried, gritting his fist in frustration.

But he followed Gi Zu’s orders and told the normal goblins to back off.

At that, they moved away from the enboro and gathered under Zu Bi and Zu Bo.

The goblins could only helplessly watch as the gigantopitecus left with the enboro’s corpse. They were so frustrated at their helplessness that none of them spoke for a long time.

“Pops... I’m sorry. If only I was stronger...” Zu Vet said.

Gi Zu shook his head despite his fading consciousness. “It’s good... that the others are safe... If they were to die in a place like this... I wouldn’t... have a face.. to show... the... king...”

Zu Vet couldn’t lift up his head. Gi Zu actually cared more for the goblins than for his hunt. That kindness touched him, and for the first time, Zu Vet found his behavior in the past to be shameful.

“Pops, you just watch... We’ll show you.”

From this day forward, Gi Zu’s goblins would unify and grow into a powerful force.

These goblins would never forget the figure of the gigantopitecus nonchalantly taking their pop’s prey. One day, they would surely get their revenge.

170 days until the war with the humans.



Gi Zu Ruo’s level has risen.

15 => 68

Bloodbath learned.

Bloodbath —When bathed in the blood of a brethren, damage received is lessened, but the influence of the mad god will grow stronger.

CHAPTER 146

FAREWELL PARTY

The northern frontlines, also known as the mountain range of the snow god, was one of the fiercest battlefields of the Germion Kingdom. With a fierce climate, one filled with the white despair of a long winter and a brief summer, the people that frequented it were mostly ruffians.

Ever since the Kingdom of Germion was founded by an evil swordsman, they have been steadily expanding their borders, and just recently, 50 years ago to be more specific, they've finally started to set their sights on the snow god's mountains.

The tribes surrounding the mountain range known as Yugushiva were hostile to the Germion Kingdom. Their people were skilled with the sword, and many of them came to be known as fierce gods. Germion Kingdom suffered in their hands.

But everything changed when a hero appeared.

With the great sword he wielded, he called forth lightning and thunder, he was the adventurer, Gulland Rifenin.

He went around the battlefield and claimed four chieftain heads. He was a holy knight and a hero.

He even managed to unify the soldiers that the weak-hearted commanders could not, allowing the war against the yugushiva to progress smoothly.

It has been 4 years since he assumed office.

After overcoming the disadvantage in numbers and driving the battle north, they were finally only one step away from defeating the yugushiva.

It was that same hero who was greatly puzzled when a messenger from the capital arrived at his office.

"As if the trip to the forest wasn't enough, they even want me to attend a farewell

party? It seems his majesty isn't very interested in ending the battle here in the north," Gulland sarcastically said.

The messenger insisted. "You may not like it, but you must go. These are the king's orders."

"Tch!" Gulland snapped his tongue, causing the messenger's countenance to pale as he bowed his head.

"Fine. Who's going to substitute for me in my absence?" Gulland asked.

"None. The northern frontlines is simply to keep status quo... The winter should bind the enemy's movements, so it was decided that Lord Gulland's short absence would not be a problem," the messenger explained.

"Well, isn't hiiiiis majesty well informed," Gulland said in a low voice as he stifled his anger.

It was true that most of the yugushiva have been killed. Although they were skilled in the blade, before Gulland's Blue Thunder, they were as helpless as lambs.

Their movements also grew dull in the winter and could not attempt any large-scale attacks.

Gulland could indeed leave without any problems. The fact that the king had seen through that greatly annoyed him.

"Then, Lord Gulland, I have given you the king's message. If you'll excuse me..."

The messenger bowed and turned heel, leaving Gulland alone to grumble.

It was an order, so he had to go.

"It's really annoying, but it looks like I'll have to see that saint again," Gulland said, then he called over his subordinates to give them orders.

"Why are you leaving too?" Gulland said, even more annoyed, as an armored female knight with red hair tied in a bundle appeared before him.

In her hands was the sword she received from the king's treasury, Vashinant. This scarlet maiden was quite popular among the people.

"It seems an important mission is being entrusted to me," she said.

Though a holy knight, it was only in name, as she did not yet have the strength fitting of the name. She has been going around the battlefield to learn from other holy knights. Once, she went south, then she came back to the north.

"Tch, well, whatever. I'm going to the capital to report. That's all, but... Oh, right. You're acquainted with that saint, right?" Gulland said.

"Did something happen to Lady Reshia?" Lili asked.

Lili has already gotten used to Gulland's rough way of talking. She no longer cowered when he spoke, and instead, even started speaking back. Gulland himself has also grown fond of Lili and her cursed sword after their many battles together.

Of course, he would never say it out loud, but he did acknowledge her.

"Apparently, she'll be going back to the Ivory Tower. Seriously, what a pain! Getting in the way of my battle!" Gulland said, annoyed.

"Then please tell her something in my place," Lili calmly said.

"Hah? And here I thought you'd cry and beg me to take you along. You sure are taking this in stride," Gulland said, surprised.

"I've already been informed through Lady Reshia's letters. Besides, I am no longer a child who bawls her eyes out, but a knight who wields her sword for the people. I won't cry anymore," Lili said.

"Hmph, well haven't you grown," Gulland said.

Lili told Gulland her message, then Gulland headed back to the capital.



I to go to a cave not too far from the fortress to hear the report of the koro dwarves.

“To think there was a cave in a place like this,” I said.

Making a map took a lot of work, as it required people to see every nook and cranny of a place before it could be made.

My request to these koro dwarves was to find me an ore deposit.

“Please look at this,” a koro dwarf said as he handed me a black stone.

He told me to look at it, but it looked no different from any other rock.

“This is good black iron, the fuel for weapons,” the koro dwarf said.

So this is the raw material that makes our weapons and armor. It’s an odd feeling to see the unprocessed material that makes up our equipment.

“Is this cave an ore deposit then?” I asked.

“Yes, though how much can be mined from it remains to be seen,” the koro dwarf replied.

These little guys might be able to forge weapons and armor, but even weapons will one day break.

My old iron great sword, for example, was plenty sturdy, but in the end, it still broke. Once the weapons break, we’ll need to rely on these guys to repair them.

So, weapons are consumables, and we’ll need ensure a constant supply of them to fight our war.

“Can you find out?” I asked.

“With time,” the koro dwarf replied.

“Then, please... Also, if possible, I would like for you to teach the centaurs and us

goblins that method,” I said.

The koro dwarves looked at each for a moment, then they nodded to show their agreement.

In order for the goblins, the demihumans, and the koro dwarves to start trading technology, a little nudging from me was necessary. We goblins don’t have much to offer, after all. The one with the most to learn from such an arrangement is none other than us goblins.

A black shadow passed by over my head. When I looked up, I noted that it was none other than the harpy, Yushika, who was currently landing on the ground.

“You weren’t in the fortress, so I figured you’d be here,” she said.

I greeted Yushika as she folded her wings, then I nodded and stated my request. This woman, who was a merchant to the core, would never come to me without an agenda.

“As usual, you’re quick to pick up. Actually, the elves entrusted me with a message,” Yushika said.

The demihumans would certainly find it difficult to refuse a request from the Forni elves, their benefactors.

Apparently, the elves were bringing back the old elven school.

“Hmm...” I folded my arms as I went deep in thought.

When Yushika saw that, she thought I was confused, so she explained the advantages of having a school. “Your Majesty might not be familiar with it, but school is a place where people learn. Various races would send the smartest among them to study. And when these people have graduated, they will return to their homelands and use what they’ve learned to better it.”

That was indeed what a school was.

“The elves are currently gathering exceptional people to become students of their academy. There will be no discrimination; demihumans, goblins... anyone will be able to enter,” Yushika explained.

School was indeed a far-fetched dream for the goblins. Even the concept of economy that we tried to teach them a few days ago... There's far too much that they don't know.

For the meantime, I should pick out which goblins to send. Education is needed to make excellent bureaucrats. If in the end, it turns out that goblins show are hopeless at managerial work, then I'll just have to get others to do it. Elves, demihumans, even humans... It doesn't really matter.

That being said, I wonder if knowing too much might end up creating a crack in my reign?

I am not perfect, I know that well. I make mistakes from time to time, and even fail sometimes... If the goblins become smarter, will there come a day when the few elite rises up against me to point out my flaws?

No, it doesn't matter. I won't cower from it.

A king is one who stands fearless in the face of all opposition.

I am a king. it doesn't matter who it is, I will face them without shame.

A king is a guardian. A king is a guide. A king is the very embodiment of pride.

I must become a king that the goblins can be proud of.

"...Very well, I shall accept the elves' proposition. In the next few days, I shall send some goblins to the elven village. What of the descendants of the crystals?" I said.

"We shall also accept. Being able to study at the school put up by our benefactors is an honor."

It seems this school has enough value just in name alone.

I nodded back as Yushika wryly smiled.

"If I may excuse myself, then..." Yushika said as she flew back to the sky.

Uneasy, I turned to the koro dwarf. "Pick two exceptional from your ranks. We shall

send them to the elven school.”

The koro dwarves’ eyes visibly bulged, then after glancing at each other for a good second or two, the koro dwarf I was talking to asked. “is that alright?”

“I may be the leader of the goblins, the race responsible for the destruction of your village, but I intend to treat you with impartiality. Besides, holding people back just because they’re of a different race will only hurt the future.”

After I asked the koro dwarves to continue their search for ores, I turned heel and left.

I don’t have the luxury of burying exceptional people in the mud.

There is far too much to do. The food problem, the government system... We don’t have time.

As I kept the irritation I felt at bay, I went back to the Fortress of the Abyss.

In the capital of Germion Kingdom, word of Reshia’s return to the Ivory Tower had already circulated.

Be it the merchants who tended to their stalls, or the laborers working by the streets, or the officers of the army, or the priests... everyone – man, woman, and child – talked about the departure of the saint. Of course, Mill Dora had also heard of the news.

The children she supported numbered over 10. Before she met Reshia, when she stopped over for a short while before heading to the forest, she had resorted to thievery, but after meeting her, she has started working an honest job.

Of course, the most profits always came from her second name ‘mage killer’.

Reshia never mentioned anything about her gangster-like work as an adventurer; she was like a hero to the children.

After finishing her work for the day, she came back to the children exhausted. Normally, she would eat and retire for the day as soon as she came back, but the children surrounded her.

“Is Reshia really leaving?” The children asked with depressed voices.

It was clear as day how they felt.

“Lady Reshia herself has already decided, so it can’t be helped,” Mill said.

But the children wouldn’t take that for an answer.

“That’s not it, we thought there was something even we could do. Mill, you’re an adventurer too, aren’t you? We’ll give you a quest.” One of the children said.

“Forget it. It’s hopeless. I’m not that skilled as an adventurer anyway,” Mill said.

Though she said that, she also wasn’t that eager about letting Reshia leave just like that.

“...So, what do you guys have in mind?” Mill found herself asking after a sigh.

When she said that, the children handed her a small hair clip.

“We prepared a parting gift. Please give this to Reshia.”

It was something they’d bought from the stores, a hair clip made with a shiny shell. Anyone could tell at first glance that it was cheap.

“Lady Reshia is famous, so she’ll probably be getting lots of gifts,” Mill said as she sighed again. “And if you’re going to give me a quest, you’re gonna have to pay up.”

These children who were born in the orphanage would have hard time once they went out into society. That was something Mill learned firsthand. If she spoiled these children now, they’ll be no good once they grow up. Of course, they were also being annoying, so she was especially harsh today.

“...This is Mii’s important friend, but I’ll give him to you,” the child, Mii, said as she handed a dirty, lukewarm bear to her.

The fact that she handed that to her showed just how much this meant to her. That tugged at Mill’s heartstrings so much so that her eyes became watery as she looked at Miinaana.

The other children surrounded her and gave her something important of their own as they begged her to carry out their request.

Mill sighed deeply as she roughly rubbed a little boy's head with teary eyes, then she accepted the hair clip.

"...Well, I'll make something happen," Mill said as she stood up from her chair, promising the children that she'll take care of it, then she tucked the children snugly into bed.

She wasn't sure herself whether Reshia would actually accept the hair clip, but no matter what, she had to meet her... for the children's sake.

"I guess I'll ask the adventurers for help," Mill muttered.

She was always quiet around the other adventurers, so she was never close with anyone. There were a few, however. For example, Wyatt, whom she was closest with, but unfortunately, he had gone somewhere, so she couldn't rely on him.

Reshia herself was also under house arrest, so she needed to go to the castle.

"If I get found out, it'll be the death sentence for sure," Mill said, clicking her tongue.

"But I have to answer to their prayers," she said.

Like the wind, Mill ran through the evening streets



The most influential people of the country were gathered in the giant ballroom. Powerful merchants, influential priests, nobles, bureaucrats, military officers, royalty...

Lined up before these men were some of the greatest and most luxurious delicacies. One bottle of the wines served here, for example, would take a whole month's salary for a measly commoner.

Even the music that played in the backdrop was splendid as the royal court musician's

music seemed to make even the flowers bloom.

Each one of these people who were permitted to attend this feast were all capable of representing their class. They competed with their splendor and exchanged information under the guise of a cheerful feast. To these people, this feast was no different from an opportunity to scout their rivals for weakness.

On the onset, a cheerful feast, but in the inside, it was a festering tumor.

It was in that sort of atmosphere that a wind blew.

“His Majesty the King and her holiness, the saint, Lady Reshia Fel Zeal!” The chamberlain announced.

Claps greeted the king and the saint as they made their entrance.

Reshia’s brows lightly raised up, but she was mostly expressionless as she walked with the king to her seat.

“Please don’t mind me. Enjoy the feast,” the king said, and the music began once more.

The influential people came one after another. They would greet the king first and then Reshia

There seemed to be no end to the greetings when the chamberlain spoke once more.

“The Holy Knight, Lord Gulland Rifenin!”

The people made a stir.

The hero, Gulland Rifenin, who was likened to the heroes of old was participating.

The crowd showered him with applause and smile, though what they were truly thinking was veiled in shadows.

Gulland’s expression was unchanging as he passed by the people and knelt before the king.

“I have returned from the northern frontlines, Your Majesty,” he said.

"Welcome back. Food and drink have been prepared, eat to your heart's content," the king said.

"...Thank you for your grace, Your Majesty," Gulland said.

Gulland gracefully turned heel as he withdrew from the king and approached Reshia.

"It's been awhile, Lady Reshia. You seem to be doing well," Gulland said.

"Yes, you seem to be doing well too," Reshia said.

Only a few words were exchanged before the two parted, and people started crowding Reshia and Gulland.

There was no end to the greetings. Even as one conversation would end and Reshia would try to get a seat to rest, more merchants lying in wait would appear to strike up a conversation. To the nobles, this feast was important, as it was held by the king. To the old merchants, this was an opportunity for them to spread their roots in the capital.

But there was a merchant who had just recently moved from the neighboring countries. He would keep talking to Reshia despite her expressionless face or her lack of reply. Naturally, anyone would raise their brows at such stubbornness.

To make things worse, the merchant appraised Reshia like a product to be sold. Reshia had almost yelled at the man, but fortunately, Gulland interjected.

"Sorry, but I have business with the saint," he said, smiling.

Unfortunately, his good deed, if he did intend it as such, was not met with welcome eyes. Reshia looked at him like she was looking at a man with bad body odor.

Meanwhile, Gulland stared daggers at the man. He was smiling, but his eyes were not. The pressure emanating from him was just like that of a powerful beast, causing the merchant to draw cold sweat all over.

"O-O-Of ncourse!" The merchant said in a panic as he quickly fled the scene.

Gulland extended his hand to Reshia.

“Your hand, my lady,” Gulland said.

At that, all eyes gathered on them. Though troubled, Reshia had no choice but to take Gulland’s hand.

“It seems you don’t have your weapon with you today,” Reshia said, wanting to at least show her displeasure through her words, but Gulland only laughed.

Ignoring the crowd that was starting to stir, the holy knight and the saint went outside.

As soon as they got out, Reshia threw Gulland’s hand away.

“What are you scheming?” Reshia asked.

“Can you not spit on a guy’s kindness?” Gulland petitioned, but Reshia’s eyes only grew colder.

“...Ok, don’t. I have a message from Lili,” Gulland said.

“Ms. Lili? What’s going on?” Reshia asked.

Seeing a crack form on Reshia’s expressionless face, Gulland couldn’t help but grin.

When Reshia saw that, she frowned and tried to bring back the frost to her face.

“Well, don’t fret, it’s nothing special. She just wants to let you know that the days she spent as your knight were her happiest,” Gulland said.

Reshia thought he would say something acrimonious, but contrary to her expectations, the words he spoke were truly from Lili.

“...I, see...” Reshia said, feeling down.

Gulland was disappointed to see that she believed him. “And here I thought you’d call me out for lying.”

Reshia shook her head and sorrowfully smiled. “I can at least see through someone

when they're lying... Well, then, Lord Holy Knight, if you'll excuse me."

Gulland clicked his tongue as he watched Reshia leave.

He went back to the feast, but he just couldn't enjoy it.

"...Hmph, Lord Holy Knight, huh."

Gulland ignored the flatteries of the nobles and left his seat.

164 days until the war with the humans.

CHAPTER 147

DEPARTURE

Within the country of the 'holy knights', only seven have reached the apex.

Every single one of these seven had their own peculiarities, but they were all strong enough that they couldn't ignore one another.

The Knight of Destruction, Zelkov; The Iron-armed Knight, Gowen; the Knight of Storms, Gulland; the Twin-Swords Knight, Vald; the Ripper Knight, Sivara; the Sharp-Eyed knight, Jize; and the late Lightning-Fast Knight, Gene Marlon.

A mad man loved by the gods, an old veteran used to war, a peak existence among adventurers, a traveler from the east... Their origin and purpose were as varied as their personalities, but there was one thing they had in common, they held the peace of the country in their hands.

On their back, they carried the soldiers they led and the countless citizens that they protected.

Of course, they knew this fact well, and it was because of that that King Ashtal named them holy knight and gave them honor and wealth befitting that of the kingdom's guardians.

"...I don't like it."

Gulland's animal-like instincts were tingling.

He didn't know why, but for some reason, that merchant that was bothering Reshia was nowhere to be seen.

As Gulland left his seat, he left the ballroom and went outside, to walk under the tranquil sky of the night god lit by the red light of the moonlight goddess.

Sounds of the feast grew more and more distant as he walked, then he heard something.

That something drew Gulland's attention.

It was the sound of grass being grazed; the sound of a person's voice being forcefully stifled. For someone like Gulland who was used to the quiet of the snowy battlefield, the castle was irritatingly noisy.

His ears honed by combat, Gulland walked toward the source of that sound.

"Oh, how cruel my dear saint, how cruel... How could you hurt this one's fragile heart?" That annoying merchant from awhile ago said with ragged breath as he approached Reshia, who was currently being held by a man covered in black, the merchant's escort perhaps.

The man in black noticed Gulland's footsteps, but the merchant was oblivious.

The merchant extended his hands toward Reshia, caressing her slender cheeks that were as smooth as clay.

"Ahh... Ahh..." The man moaned.

As his hands caressed Reshia's cheeks like a slug, desire took him, and he jumped to embrace her, but—

"That's enough, scum," a voice suddenly resounded from behind him, causing him to freeze in his tracks.

When he turned around, his eyes almost fell out of their sockets when he saw Gulland standing behind him with his arms folded.

"K-K-K-Kill him! Sigmund!" The merchant commanded.

The black guard immediately threw Reshia away and drew his dagger.

As Reshia fell to the ground, unconscious, Gulland snapped his tongue.

"What an unnecessary mess I've found myself in."

As Gulland muttered to himself, the black guard swung his blade at Gulland's throat.

“Hmph,” Gulland haughtily said as he dodged the black guard’s sword by a hair’s breadth.

At the same time, he caught the black guard’s arms, keeping him from moving.

“Weak,” Gulland said.

With no room to run, Gulland’s fist descended freely on the man.

There wasn’t even a sign that Gulland was about to make a move. He just swung his fist like a beast attacking its prey, sending the black guard flying into a wall.

With no way out, the black guard reached for his own armor.

“What are you...” Gulland asked when the black guard suddenly threw his armor at him, causing his vision to move away from the black guard for a moment.

When he looked for the black guard again, all traces of him were gone.

“He ran...” Gulland muttered, then he turned to the merchant.

“E-Eeek...” The merchant cried as Gulland’s eyes bore into him.

Gulland knocked the merchant out, then he carried both him and Reshia.

“...What a pain,” Gulland complained.

“GAU, GUUUU!” Gastra barked when Gulland entered Reshia’s room, but Gulland ignored him and left Reshia on her bed before leaving.

“...Lord Holy Knight, huh,” Gulland said as he became unnecessarily sentimental, then he closed the door behind him and sat in front of it.

He didn’t feel like returning to the feast, so he figured he might as well wait here in the silence of the night god.

Gulland closed his eyes.



Gi Ji Arsil's report had finally arrived.

The walls of the human fortress ran 10km long. It was so long, I couldn't help but wonder from where and how they managed to procure all that stone in such a short time, but even more surprising was the height of the walls.

The walls were over 3 meters tall. Moreover, people could walk atop it.

That meant that the walls weren't just long and high, they were also thick.

It should be safe to assume that the castle walls are arranged in a circle. As for what's inside, it's probably either defensive facilities or a town.

According to the report, there were also things similar to shields placed near the exit leading to the human territory.

They are probably meant to obstruct one's vision and stop an attack, but that's something to think about another time. Right now, I should focus my attention on the human fortress.

The humans have gone far and beyond my expectations.

Walls 3 meters high coupled with several defensive facilities. Attacking the human fortress does not seem like an easy task.

Beyond the forest is a flat land. There might be a hill or two out there, but there shouldn't be anything taller than the human fortress.

"A shield thrust before us, huh."

Should we capture it despite the cost? Or should we just ignore it?

To begin with, my goal isn't to capture the fortress but to defeat the human kingdom.

The human villages shouldn't all be that big.

"Shumea, there's something I want to ask," I said.

Shumea has been training with Felbi ever since recovering.

“Hmm? About the human villages?” She asked, puzzled.

“Gi Ji’s report came in just awhile ago. Apparently, there’s a large fortress right in front of the fortress.”

“That’s probably a colonial city,” Shumea said.

Oh? It seems to be famous.

Things finally made sense after listening to Shumea’s explanation. It seems these so-called ‘colonial cities’ are bases the humans build to begin an invasion. With it working with the city behind it, it is certainly a threat.

I thought it was a shield, but it turns out, it’s actually a spear meant to drag us into a war of attrition.

It would be great if the humans could fight among themselves, but that’s obviously too much to hope for. After all, they’re all united as one race fighting against monsters.

Not to mention, the person leading them is that general. I can’t expect them to make much mistakes.

In that case...

We’ll have no choice but to take them by surprise from behind.

We have to use something unexpected, something they haven’t thought of, a method beyond their wildest imagination...

...Unfortunately, nothing really comes to mind. The blessing of the goddess of wisdom isn’t something that comes just because one wants it. Well, I’ll just take my time.

I’ll have to pull out that card to gather information and steal a march on them.

“Shumea,” I called out.

“What is it, Boss?” She asked.

“Do you want to go out of the forest?” I asked.

Shumea looked at me with a shocked face, then she made a difficult face and said, “please don’t ask difficult questions.”

“It’s not really difficult, though. Do you want to go or not?”

“You sure make it sound simple, Boss. I hope you haven’t forgotten that I’m a slave.”

“Former slave,” I corrected.

Shumea scratched her head. “Well, yeah, but... Damn it! Honestly, I really want to go out! But, it’s just... you know... kinda scary?”

At first, excited, then meek as a lamb. Even Shumea seemed embarrassed at how cowardly she was acting, as a blush could be seen on her cheeks.

“Hmm...”

According to her, slaves who have lost their master will become the slave of whoever catches them, so we’ll have to do something about her identity as a slave.

“It should be fine as long as we give you a new master,” I said.

“W-Wait a moment, Boss. Goblins are no good,” she said.

Naturally, but at least, she’s catching on. Good, that will make this quick.

“Obviously, especially since the master himself will also need some identification,” I said.

“Well, yeah, but do you have someone like that?” She asked.

“Yes, the only question is whether that person will agree or not. And even if that person does agree, the fortress probably won’t rest easy knowing who it is we’re placing our hopes on. But after that, everything will hinge on you,” I said.

“I owe you a lot, Boss, so don’t worry. You can definitely count on me,” Shumea said as she laughed.

Now, all that’s left is to pick out the master.

After sending a messenger to her, she finally appeared before me.

“Are you serious?” She asked.

Yes, it was none other than Pale Symphoria. The green light reflecting from the trees of the forest illuminated her and Selena as they looked at me.

When it came to healing secret medicines, being bathed in light was quite effective.

“Yes,” I nodded.

Pale became quiet.

I would be lying if I said I didn’t have my doubts. She wasn’t like Gi Ga and the others who have sworn fealty to me. She also wasn’t someone like Shumea who couldn’t betray me because of her circumstances.

The demihumans and the elves might both be our allies in this war against the humans, but their positions were vastly different from each other.

“I don’t understand... You are not a fool. Surely, you must realize that I will betray you,” Pale said, startling Selena.

Having that said straight to my face, I couldn’t help but wryly smile.

“The elves won’t be enough to fetter me,” she said.

“I figured that would be the case,” I said.

“Then why?” She asked suddenly, and I honestly replied.

“Do you think what you know can hurt us?” I asked.

“That’s...”

“Humans can have a broader outlook because of the knowledge they possess. It is, therefore, a king’s duty to give one the opportunity to ascertain the truth,” I said.

Puzzled, Pale asked. “Are you saying you’re giving me time and opportunity?”

This woman, Pale Symphoria, wasn’t someone who would turn to my side so easily, but after coming here to this fortress, she has started to change. After all, she has seen our way of life. That alone is enough to change the one truth she has held all this time... We are not monsters.

I’d love to know what she thought when she realized that, but while it probably wasn’t at Felbi’s level, it must have still caused a world-shaking change of her perspective.

I’m going to use this as an opportunity to pull this genius into my army.

“Confident, aren’t we?” She said.

I smiled back.

It’s a risky gamble, but I can’t just wait for her feelings to change naturally.

Pale, I don’t know if you truly haven’t noticed it or are simply feigning ignorance, but...

When you fought me in the battlefield back then, you were smiling.

You’re happiest when leading an army in a battle of life and death.

I don’t know if it’s hunting monsters that you find fun or having power in your grasp, but regardless, I have chosen you.

“Of course, if you refuse, there’s nothing I can do,” I said.

“Please let me think a bit,” Pale said.

Selena looked at her with a tinge of displeasure.

The next day, Pale agreed. Selena would be coming with her and she also recommended Felbi to act as an interim between Shumea and me.

Like this, the party of three elves and one human set out into the world of humans.



That was a memory of the time when he still believed in the illusion called happiness.

A memory tinged with the red of blood and shame, and remorse for icing.

No matter how hard he cried or flailed his arms, that was a memory in the past he could never reach.

The village he lived in was a small village.

It was a village of 100 people surrounded by a fence that kept the monsters away. It was a small peaceful village where everyone knew each other.

Life as an adventurer had its risks, but it paid well, allowing him to have a small fortune.

He had a fiancée. He had a mother, who though old, was cheeky. He had a cute younger sister.

Though he wasn't rich, he was happy.

But one day, that happiness was destroyed.

A horde of monsters attacked his village.

As a young man, he flailed his arms and mustered every little bit of strength he could, but struggle as he tried, in the end, the monsters broke through and killed the men who fought.

As for the women, they were—

He stretched out his hand, but his blood-stained hands couldn't reach them...

Suddenly, his consciousness became detached... Detached from that dream he's seen countless times.

The sun of the fragrant spring shone on him, bringing him into a warm embrace that lulled him into a deep slumber.

In that deep slumber, there were no nightmares.

“ ... ”

When the sun's rays fell on his closed eyelids, he finally woke up.

He clicked his tongue upon realizing that he had fallen asleep, then when he saw a blanket on him, he became confused.

The door to the spire had already been opened, the insides empty like that of a snake's shed skin.

Picking himself up, he went to the terrace of the castle and looked down on the city.

Crowds had gathered to wish the saint farewell.

“Saint, huh? What a load of bull,” he spat, then he left to prepare for his return to the north.

He would not waver because of something like this. He was a holy knight, an existence who slayed monsters and protected the people.

It was just that his eyes couldn't help but follow after the saint's leaving figure.

The crowds showered her with cheers, and just a little, she tried to wave back.

A cheap hair-clip could be seen attached firmly on her hair, but no one except for some boys by the corner of a street, noticed it.

163 days until the battle with the humans.

INTERMISSION

GI DO'S ANGUISH

Status	
Name	Gi Do Buruga
Race	Goblin
Level	1
Class	Shaman
Possessed Skills	Magic Manipulation; Realized Wings; Protection of the Wind; Wind Spear; Three-Verse Chant; Guidance of the Goddess of Wisdom; Researcher
Divine Protection	God of Wind
Attributes	Wind

The great king said that there was much to be learned from the elves.

He was right.

Presently, I am studying with my teacher, Gi Za Zakuend, here in the elven village.

Just some time ago, they hated us, and yet now, here we are in Gastair, doing 'class-work'.

My teacher says that to simply leave everything to the king is to fail our duties as his retainers. We had to always be thinking what we could do for the king.

I share my teacher's sentiments. If we only obeyed the king, we would be no better than beasts.

The king intends to defeat the humans. He has even considered what will happen afterwards. But this is something I only heard from the elves.

According to the old teacher, Falun, the king is trying to create a Kingdom of Goblins.

There are certain things that a kingdom needs.

But... What is a kingdom anyway?

"A kingdom is a place where people live," the old teacher explained, but that only confused me more.

I mean, according to that logic, isn't the forest a kingdom?

I asked the old teacher that, and he grinned at me. "Your king wishes for an even bigger kingdom."

I see, so the king wants a great kingdom.

In that case, what would a kingdom need?

"One, is a set of 'laws' to adhere to; another, is a 'people' to rule over; and lastly, power." The old teacher wrote the terms we'd only recently learned on the sand plate.

"The law is the foundation of a government. It is only after establishing the law that one can tax the people and judge wrongdoers and direct the path of the people."

Tax... A way for the country to gather wealth. In other words, the country will be able procure lots of meat.

Judge, judgment, trials... That refers to the exchange between Lord Gi Go and his majesty. For example, the people have no right to complain even if they are killed if they point their sword at the king.

To direct, guidance, policies... For example, one doesn't have to die as long as he doesn't point his sword at the king.

"From what we've discussed a few days ago, there are those among you who have received a family name from the king and have been given the right to own a land, correct?" The old teacher confirmed.

I nodded.

"That is something akin to a contract," the old teacher said.

What is he talking about? That was the king's orders.

"They are similar, though not wholly," the old teacher continued.

Mu, mu?

"The king has rewarded you with a family name and a territory."

On the plate of sand, he wrote the word 'king' on one plot of land, then he added the words 'last name'.

"When you work, the king will reward you. You offer the king labor, and in exchange, the king gives you a fitting reward. When you look at it from this perspective, doesn't it look just like a contract?"

N-Now that he mentions it...

But wouldn't this sort of thinking be disrespectful to the king?

I can't come to terms with it, but I can't fault the logic.

"The law is really just a collection of such promises, which is why, it is imperative that the law be obeyed."

Agreed. A promise with the king is indeed something to be protected.

"But there are people who can't keep these promises."

Such people are unforgivable!

"Yes, which is why a kingdom needs power. There must be a king and an army, and when everything is put together, that is what we refer to as a kingdom."

But why does it feel like the kingdom is bigger than the king? The king is greater than all!

"Such a king is not a king but a tyrant. You cannot call such a person a wise ruler."

Are you mocking the king!?

“Gi Do Buruga, do you know why the king is a king? Think about it, that will be your assignment.”

The old teacher grinned as he said that, then he ended the class.

“Why is the king a king?”

Gi Do couldn't help but groan.

The king is a king because he is a king.

Isn't that obvious?



“It seems a kingdom can't be built so easily after all,” teacher and I poured our efforts into the research on ether after the class with old Falun ended.

“I don't think it's wise to believe everything that old elf says,” teacher said as he gathered the winds around his staff. “I know the old elf is knowledgeable and experienced, but in the end, the things he says are an elf's ideals. We goblins have our own way of thinking.”

True, I certainly don't like the idea of calling the king a despot.

“That might be so, but...”

“And besides, we haven't learned anything that might be profitable.”

Teacher made a difficult face as the gathered winds became bigger.

“Profitable?” Gi Do asked.

“Yes, for example, Gi Do Buruga, you might know of ‘law’, but can you give me something concrete?” His teacher asked.

Now that he mentions it... I don't actually know law!

“The elves do not have a king. Shure could have become one, but in the end, he just became a representative of the sage’s council.”

Teacher is just as difficult as old Falun.

“Isn’t the king, king? Why would the representative of the sage’s council...”

“No, he definitely could have become one...”

As teacher became thoughtful, the gathered winds above him shot forth, dispersing to different directions, then his face became sterner.

“It’s no good. I can’t concentrate,” he said.

He’s not satisfied? Even after controlling that much wind?

Teacher’s spirit of inquiry is indeed only something I can admire.

“Reality is different from idea,” he said.

Does he mean a country is only an idea?

Teacher waved his hands, so I excused myself.



I walked aimlessly, wondering to myself what I could do for the king.

Teacher’s research on magic and demihuman blood seems to be progressing, but what about me? Isn’t there something I could do?

But...

I can’t control the winds like teacher does, so researching magic seems pointless. Because in the end I’ll just end up admiring teacher. I have to take a different path.

As I walked and pondered like that, I happened across the elven princess, sitting under the shade of a tree as she read a book.

If I recall correctly, she is Princess Shunaria.

In search of an answer, I decided to call out to her.

“Greetings, Princess Shunaria,” I said.

She turned to me with a displeased expression, but when she saw who it was calling her, her face turned to that of shock, only to change into displeasure again a moment later.

What an expressive person.

“Just as I was wondering who it was, it turns out to be a goblin,” she said.

Daughter of the king’s sworn friend, Shure Forni.

She puffed up her cheeks and pouted her mouth as she complained.

“Flattery from a goblin person is a bit...”

I don’t recall flattering anyone, though.

“My name is Gi Do Buruga, it’s a pleasure to make your acquaintance,” I said.

“Shunaria Forni. It is my pleasure as well,” she replied.

“I noticed you were making a difficult face as you read... What kind of book is it?”

She wryly smiled and showed me the book. “A history book.”

“History? What is history?” I asked.

“I suppose it’s only normal that you don’t know. It is a record of the events that occurred in the past. In a sense, you could say it’s the crystallization of knowledge.”

A record of the past? I don’t understand that very well, but the crystallization of knowledge!? That sounds spectacular!

“This one tells the history of a human country... Would you like to read it?”

“Is that alright? I thought for sure it would be something precious...”

“It’s fine. Here,” Lord Shunaria said as she handed me the book.

I quickly opened it, but...

“...Ati..., 41... years? Erm...”

I can’t read!

I just started learning how to read recently, so there’s a lot of characters I don’t know.

“Ah, could it be you...”

“My deepest apologies. After you went out of your way to lend it to me, I’m afraid there are simply far too many difficult words...”

“I see...”

Lord Shunaria seems disappointed. I have no excuse.

“Then, how about I teach you?” She suddenly proposed.

What!?

“If it is alright, then by all means!”

I said without thinking.

A crystallization of knowledge... Yes, this must be it!

I have finally found something I can do for the king!

“Ah, but I have a request first,” Lord Shunaria said.

“What is it? If it’s something I can do, then!” I replied.

“We elves might have become sworn friends with the goblins, but we know next to nothing about you. So, won’t you tell me about your people?”

Oh, is that it? That’s not a problem at all.

“Gladly,” I said.

Lord Shunaria smiled as she watched me deeply nod.

After this, the elves would start seeing a goblin with a history book on one hand and a large flower on the other.

When word of this reached the Fortress of the Abyss, Gi Gi Orudo’s eyes went as dark as the black of the night. As for whether he approached Gi Do or not... Well...

CHAPTER 148

THE DISTANT SOUTH

After running some tests, we finally found out what was causing the seeds to die.

The soil is bad.

It was something very simple, but it had taken us a lot of time to realize it. Now that we know the cause, we can start solving the problem.

The soil was the problem, so naturally, we should try changing it.

There are trees and plants growing around the fortress, but they probably have some sort of resistance that the praya seed doesn't have.

The miasma surrounding the fortress had gotten much thinner, but it seems it's effects lingers yet.

This won't be easy to solve.

Transporting soil from elsewhere is going to take a while, and if the miasma affects the soil, everything could end up being for naught.

At some point, I wondered if maybe the seed was the problem, but after realizing just how many of its kind grew in areas away from the fortress, I realized how faulty of a hypothesis that was.

I guess the soil is really the culprit, after all.

The demihuman manager and I racked our heads for a solution, but in the end, what solved our problems was a coincidence.

The soil-eaters (mole) Gi Gi had brought back, couldn't only be found in his village but everywhere around the Fortress of the Abyss. With these critters, it was possible to have them eat the soil of another land and then have theme excrete it elsewhere.

Now that I've experienced it for myself, the gift of the goddess of wisdom was indeed just like a flash of lightning.

The miasma could affect soil, but what about something that has been excreted?

The demihuman manager and I immediately put our hypothesis to test, and to our surprise, the praya seeds started growing at a frightening rate.

Perhaps it's because the soil is the possession of the god of earth, but something that has been excreted belongs to the god of poop... Only, there's no such god. At the very least, I've never heard of one.

The influence of the gods is indeed a troubling thing.

"Your master seems to be quite popular," I sarcastically said to the snakes in my two arms.

The living detest the dead, though they only do so because of their ignorance.

So Verid says, but as far as the world is concerned, believing in things one can't see is even more foolish.

Even if the world can understand some of it, the only ones who have the leisure to think of such things are those who have no trouble filling their stomach.

"Is that your opinion as someone who doesn't have to worry about feeding himself?" I asked.

The time to live for ourselves has long passed. Now, all that awaits us is death for our master.

Verid spoke no more after that, and neither did I.

Anyhow, with this, we've passed through the first stage of solving our food problem. I don't know how big of a harvest we can have, but as we expand the fields, we should be able to expect a considerable harvest.

All that's left now is to change the goblins' diet, which is the bigger problem, actually. Makes one want to sigh.



At the king's behest, Gi Gu Verbena had gone south.

As a goblin skilled in leadership and as someone who possessed the skill, wolf pack, Gi Gu was able to find much success in the south, allowing him to evolve into a duke class.

He was so successful that some of the goblins even mistook him for the king.

But Gi Gu refused the title, and instead insisted that he be called 'great brother' instead.

Gi Gu led the three rare class brothers Gu Big, Gu Tough, Gu Long, and the rest of his goblin horde deeper down south.

Leading the long-armed goblins of the south, their numbers – counting only the warriors – exceeded more than 500. There were even some beast tamers and druids among them. Their horde had a power comparable to that of a small country.

Gi Gu made use of different types of warriors because of his admiration for the king, but the reason he was able to pull it off was in and of itself a testament to his skill.

Gi Gu had conquered 20 different goblin villages and picked out the best among them to create a platoon of warriors, which he took with him as he headed further south.

Before they knew it, they had already left the forest.

A desolate vast stony desert extended before them as the fire god's body shone its scorching light on the land and the burning winds blew the hot sand, creating a fog-like veil in the air.

Gi Gu who had never left the forest was shocked to see the world outside.

"This is... not our home," he muttered.

To Gi Gu, the thick forest was their home. He might have lived in a cave once or twice, but in the end, that was a cave within the forest. In the forest, the many trees would soften the light of the sun, and the cool breeze the winds blew was always gentle to

the skin. The presence of life was ever present, beasts and vegetation alike.

That was Gi Gu's definition of the word 'home'. Which is why when he saw the desert for the first time, he was not impressed.

"We have already reached the end of the forest. We have done enough."

In truth, not even the humans lived in this harsh desert, and this land actually extended even further, but Gi Gu had no way of knowing that.

"The time to return has come."

After seeing the southern desert, Gi Gu Verbena turned around and led the southern goblins back to the north.

Along the way back, Gi Gu's great horde never once stopped.

If their way of fighting were to be described in a few words, it would be: brute force.

Brute force through sheer numbers.

It was a fighting style that Gi Gu naturally arrived at with his high leadership skills and the goblins' high reproductive rate, but Gi Gu went as far as to perfect it.

If a lone goblin would lose, then three would be equal. If three were equal, then six would surely be able to secure victory. Following that line of thought, Gi Gu arranged his horde and fought enemy after enemy.

The southern goblins had long arms, so they could climb the trees easily. Gi Gu took that into consideration as he formulated a plan specifically for these goblins. As a result, the goblins under him would attack from the ground and from above at almost the same time.

Before Gi Gu's goblins, stopping for a single moment meant being turned into minced meat the next. That fighting style mercilessly tore through monsters and beasts alike.

Though everything seemed plain from the frontlines where Gi Gu stood, to those on the receiving end of his charge, it was like a never ending wave of goblins.

Gi Gu's horde even destroyed an orc village along the way, they even pursued them. Normally, it was the orcs hunting the goblins, but Gi Gu's horde was so mighty that their positions were switched. Even the strong tusk elephants (Dino) of the southern forest, who stood out from other elephants because of their long snout and tusks, were not spared from the Gi Gu Horde's mad march.

There were a lot of monsters that lived south from the Fortress of the Abyss.

The antmen (killer ants) who would go to and fro the forest and the desert.

The robust orcs.

The rhinoceros-beetle men (scarab) who possessed a hard shell.

Even with just three races alone, they covered a considerable area of the south.

They were not without weakness, however. The orcs did not have big villages and the scarabs could only cover a small area with their slow bodies.

The most annoying ones were the killer ants, who though weak in a one-on-one fight were strong in groups.

It was exactly these killer ants who blocked Gi Gu's way.

"Killer ants, in front. Lots, of them!" A goblin reported in an almost scream-like fashion.

Gi Gu fiercely laughed. "Good timing, I was wondering what gift to bring. I'll settle my dispute with these guys today."

Unsheathing the long sword by his waist, Gi Gu let out an overpowering howl and commanded his subordinates. "Warriors! Do not stop! There is no one in these lands who can make us halt our march!"

As the three brother goblins directly under Gi Gu shouted back in response, a fire was lit within the rest of the goblins.

As Gi Gu proceeded, a lake and a battle near it between the antmen and the goblins could be seen.

There was nothing resembling a battle formation.

Their numbers seemed equal, and the battle proceeded with the goblins starting to surround the antmen.

When Gi Gu saw that he commanded the goblins, “Focus on attacking! There’s no need to complete the encirclement!”

As the goblins started to surround the antmen, they focused on their attacks and tried to break through the army of antmen. Gi Gu’s order was spot on, as it kept the antmen from being able to show their full potential. These ants were weaker in a one-on-one fight with the goblins from the start, so in time, they were pushed back and forced to flee.

When Gi Gu saw the antmen start running, he ordered the goblins to chase after them.

The antmen didn’t want to lose the things they had captured, so they ran as they protected their prized belongings at the center of their formation.

Gi Gu ordered the fast among them to chase after the antmen, while he staged an attack from both flanks. Gi Gu’s attacks became even fiercer.

“Great brother, the ants, have run!”

“They ran! They ran!”

“Spoils, secured!”

The three brothers danced with joy while Gi Gu nodded with satisfaction.

Gi Gu looked toward the spoils and muttered to himself, “Nu... Handling these won’t be easy, but at least, I’ll have some unique souvenirs for the king...”

Gi Gu ordered the goblins to carefully carry the spoils, then they continued their march to the north again.



I had asked the priestess and chief of the Gordob Goblins, Kuzan, to search the Fortress of the Abyss' basement. When that search was nearing completion, I called her over and told her of my plans.

I told her that I intended to respond positively to the elven school and offered to send her.

"I... Still have something I can do!" Kuzan stretched herself tall as she said that.

It was a charming sight, but this is important.

"It would be troubling if you were satisfied with your current state. The Gaidga have increased their numbers, the Paradua have strengthened their warriors, and the Ganra have started developing new technology... Do you understand what I'm saying?"

"...Your Majesty wishes for the Gordob to aim higher."

I nodded, and Kuzan looked down to the ground.

"Your Majesty," Yellow said. "If I may express myself..."

"Speak," I implored him.

"Are you unhappy with our chief, Kuzan?" He asked.

"Why would I be?" I asked.

"It seemed as if we weren't needed anymore," he said.

The Gordob was a tribe of small goblins. They were clearly the most different of the four goblin tribes. They were a tribe wholly unsuited for battle, making them conspicuously different.

Not only were these goblins weak in battle, they were also few in numbers.

Though they were currently in charge of managing the Fortress of the Abyss, if some other goblin were to surpass them, they would eventually lose their position. A tribe

who couldn't fight needed to find a path to survival.

If they were to lose my protection, their tribe would collapse in one fell swoop.

"Kuzan is a gentle child. She only refused because of the tribe, please, Your Majesty, please be lenient on her," Yellow said as he prostrated himself.

"O king, our king, if I may be so bold, please tell us that you still need us!" Yellow said.

I looked at her.

She was still crestfallen, but I could see the anxiety hidden in her eyes as she waited for my answer.

"Kuzan..."

"We are a fragile race."

I see. She must've been thinking all this time what it was she could do as chief, while the other tribes progressed.

Her worries must've gotten worse gradually as well. After all, with the twin-headed snake she worshiped gone, she and her tribe truly only had me left.

It seems I haven't been very considerate.

"Don't worry, I don't intend to abandon the Gordob Tribe. At the very least, so long as I am king, I will ensure that there is a way for you to show your loyalty."

Kuzan and Yellow bowed.

"In that case, I shall accept the king's command," Yellow said.

With that I decided on Kuzan and Gi Do Buruga – who was already in the village anyway – as the goblins who would be enrolling.

CHAPTER 149

ALLY MOVEMENT

In an unusual turn of events, the koro dwarves visited me in the fortress. Apparently, the search for black iron ore in the cave has been going smoothly, so they decided to forge a prototype weapon. Their visit today was to show me that prototype.

“King of Goblins, I present to you...” The representative koro dwarf bowed his head as he respectfully presented to me a long sword.

It was a lustrous blade with its balance perfectly aligned at the center.

“Well made. How many can you make in a day?” I asked.

The dwarves talked among themselves, then the representative turned to me with a frown as he bowed. “Unfortunately, we can make no more than two a day.”

Two swords, that was far too few. But considering the manufacturing process and the number of koro dwarf smiths, two swords is probably the most they could make.

In fact, when you think about their circumstances, it’s actually a lot.

“In that case, forge a weapon every day and use the rest of the time to teach the centaurs and the Ganra your craft.”

If the centaur and the Ganra could learn to forge, the number of weapons we could produce would also increase.

So long as the ore – the fuel so to speak – can keep up, the number of weapons produced should rise greatly.

“If you have any requests...”

The koro dwarves bowed their head and promised to cooperate.

I was pretty much asking them to hand out their secrets, there was no way they would

happily comply. Fortunately, the elven school turned out to be an attractive bait.

The koro dwarves have never been given the opportunity to enter the elven school, so they were willing to close their eyes to the small disadvantage they would incur by teaching the Ganra and the centaur.

“I look forward to your work.”

As I said that, I dismissed them and welcomed Gilmi.

“It’s been a while, Your Majesty. I’ve come to report the completion of the beacon you’ve asked to be built.”

The Ganra were the most handy among the goblins, so I ordered their hero, Gilmi Fishiga, to construct me a beacon that will let us know when the enemy is attacking.

“How is it?” I asked.

“It was difficult to see from the Fortress of the Abyss, so I built another one at the village of Ganra. My apologies for taking action on my own,” Gilmi said.

I had asked him to build it at the cave where Gi Go once lived in, but apparently, it was difficult to see from here.

To think that he was able to ascertain the purpose behind the beacon and was able to take steps to meet that goal, as expected of Gilmi, he is indeed someone you can rely on.

“You’ve done well. I will be relying on Ganra for the days to come,” I praised.

“We shall do anything if it is for the king,” Gilmi replied.

As I watched Gilmi leave, the next goblin to appear before me was the goblin I’d permitted to build a village, the ancient beast tamer, Gi Gi Orudo.

Apparently, something has gone awry, for his brows were furrowed.

Gi Gi knelt before me. “My liege, please hear the request of this one, Gi Gi Orudo.”

Apparently, the female goblins refused to approach his village out of fear of the stench coming from the beasts he'd brought.

To remedy that, Gi Gi thought if he could have female goblin children raised in his village from the start, they would get used to it and not fear it.

The beasts were certainly a new addition, so the female goblins who were unfamiliar with them must've been stressed. As a result, no children were being born in his village. Gi Gi's request is reasonable.

"Very well. I must've inconvenienced you greatly for failing to notice. You may take 10 children with you," I said.

Gi Gi excitedly bowed his head and withdrew.

At long last, I was able to take a breather.



When Ra Gilmi Fishiga returned, he requested an audience with Princess Narsa. Though still only a rare class, Princess Narsa was the chief of Ganra Village and Gilmi's childhood friend.

Gilmi was deeply indebted to Princess Narsa's father, Gilan, so he always looked after her.

"I have fulfilled the king's mission, thus, I have returned," Gilmi said.

Though they were childhood friends, Princess Narsa felt something more than that of sibling love for the revered hero, Gilmi, but she hid those feelings within as she generously bowed to him.

"I hear you did spectacularly. Well done," Princess Narsa said.

Gilmi passed on what the king had told him. When he lifted his head, he looked toward the influential goblins of Ganra.

The chief, Princess Narsa; the warrior, Ru Rou; and the recently rising goblin, Re Roen.

These three goblins each came from different families, each responsible for the production and manufacturing of the goblin bows.

A goblin called out from these influential people, it was the goblin skilled at manufacturing, Re Roen.

“So the koro dwarves will be teaching us the method to forge iron, but how shall we pick who will learn among us?”

That was a question pointed to Gilmi and Princess Narsa.

Princess Narsa thought for a moment before answering. “I do not wish to be partial, have every family send out two goblins.”

Princess Narsa heaved a sigh of relief when she saw Gilmi nod to her, then she looked back on these influential goblins.

When she saw Roen and Rou bowing their heads, she concluded the meeting.

After the meeting, the two childhood friends spent some time together.

They talked about various things such as the state of the surrounding territories, the trend in the king’s court, and the other things they thought worthy of concern as they decided on Ganra’s future course.

“It’s the king’s command, we have to obey,” Gilmi said.

Currently, they were talking about Ganra’s dedication to building stone arrows and leather armor.

“The king never ceases to amaze me. It seems as if he’s always thinking one step ahead of us... Because of that, all our preparation went to naught,” Narsa said with a tinge of loneliness to her voice.

Gilmi corrected her. “No, that probably won’t be the case.”

Narsa’s curious eyes prompted Gilmi to continue.

“The production of iron armor will take some time. It won’t be possible to outfit every

warrior with them at the king's appointed date. Moreover, iron armor is heavy and difficult to use," Gilmi said.

For Ganra, who was responsible for supporting from the back, the lighter and easier to handle leather armors were much more preferable.

"You mean!?" Narsa exclaimed with a smile as she realized what Gilmi was getting at.

"Even with the koro dwarves and the Ganra working together, the demand for leather armor should remain high for a while. The princess' decision was not a mistake," Gilmi said.

It was the first order Princess Narsa had given out to help the king. Naturally, she was happy that it wasn't for naught.

Seeing her happy, Gilmi smiled too. At the same time, he decided to sound out the king's intentions after seeing the progress of the iron equipment.



The famous chief of the harpies, Yushika, presented a proposition to the collective demihuman body known as the 'Eight Flags'.

After the king requested to build inns, the idea to connect the various villages with roads suddenly came to mind.

According to her proposition, her race will seek out the shortest route from the skies, while the centaurs, the rizarat (long-tailed), and the minotaurs will clear out the forest and transported the lumber. After the path was clear, the tarpidae (mud-scales), the araneae, and the papirsag (shell tribe), will be responsible for building the road, while the fang and the goblins stood guard.

Yushika burned with passion as she tried to persuade the tribes. That serious appearance of hers was truly unlike her usually languid appearance.

"Trade between our races will explode if we can get this done! Our country will progress by leaps and bounds!"

Gurfia, whose dreams ended prematurely, and Daizos, who sacrificed himself to repay

the elves. There was no better time than today if they were to ever realize the dreams of their late comrades, Yushika persuaded.

Persuaded by her zeal, the Eight Flags decided to build the roads. They would build them from the goblin's headquarters all the way to the elven village. It was an enormous undertaking.

"You're working hard," a voice said.

When the meeting ended, someone said that to Yushika. When she turned around, she noted that it was the araneae, Nikea.

It was her race who allied themselves with the goblins first, and it was also her who stood at the vanguard in the elven unification war.

"Really?" Yushika said to her friend, playing dumb.

Nikea asked with emphasis, "Has the Goblin King influenced you?"

"Maybe." Yushika wryly smiled and Nikea returned it. "But it's true that it's for the glory of my race and the Eight Flags..."

"You're doing this for our late friends, aren't you?" Nikea asked.

Yushika tried to brush her off by laughing, but then she went silent and started speaking of an old friend. "I'm sure Daizos would feel vexed if he were alive."

Nikea agreed. "Enough to regret dying."

The two wryly smiled, then Nikea excused herself and left.

"Regret it, Daizos. Because now that you're gone, there's nothing else you can do but watch," Yushika said, criticizing her old friend. But though her words seemed sharp, there wasn't a hint of ill will in them.



The great elven village of the west, Gastair. It was a village ruled by old Falun, a brilliant elf who wouldn't lose even to the famed and heroic Shure of Forni.

The elves were in the middle of carrying out their big project, the elven school.

In the past, the elven school had only taken in students from the various villages of the sylph, never once opening its doors for the other races, but at Falun's suggestion, that had changed.

Demihumans, koro dwarves, elves, and even goblins were now being accepted.

Falun himself was in charge of managing the school. In it they taught all sorts of subjects such as language, geography, history, math, and magic.

Falun personally picked out the teachers from the elves and the teaching material from the elven libraries.

Except for the meals, which the students had to deal with, the school was extremely generous and accommodating, even going as far as to provide a room for every student.

Moreover, even the students themselves could decide how long they would be studying. It was truly the best environment for studying.

Anyone who saw the elven village for the first time would find their hometowns inferior, what with its showy civilization, the blooming flowers, and the gentle light of the sun that made even the splashes of water sparkle.

"This is amazing, Kuzan..."

The little koro dwarf girl, who accompanied Kuzan, opened her eyes wide the moment she saw the village. Meanwhile, the other koro dwarf was speechless as she looked up at the great elven village.

Even when compared to Forni and Symphoria, the great elven village of Gastair was a league above. After all, old Falun had poured his life into raising up Gastair, making it the most prosperous village even among the sylphs.

If even the elves themselves could be left dumbfounded, what more of the other races?

"You've arrived. Welcome," old Falun said as he welcomed these exchanged students,

starting with Kuzan.

“My name is Kuzan! From the Fortress of the Abyss!”

Compared to the two koro dwarves who had lost themselves in their astonishment, Kuzan was able to properly respond to Falun.

“I am Falun Gastair. I shall be responsible for everyone for the days to come. It is a pleasure to meet all of you,” Falun said.

“The pleasure is ours!” The students replied.

As Falun led the students, the school life of these young students had finally begun.

—152 days until the war with the humans.

CHAPTER 150

THE WIND FROM THE SOUTH

Status	
Race	Goblin
Level	72
Class	King; Ruler
Possessed Skills	Ruler of the Demon Children of Chaos; Defiant Soul; World Devouring Howl; Sword Mastery A-; Dominator; King's Soul; Ruler's Wisdom III; Household of the Gods; One-Eyed Snake's Evil Eye; The King's Dance at the Edge of Death; Magic Manipulation; Soul of the Berserk King; Third Impact (The Third Chant); Warrior's Instinct; Blessing of the Underworld Goddess; Guided One
Divine Protection	Goddess of the Underworld (The goddess)
Attributes	Darkness; Death
Subordinate Beasts	High Kobold Hasu (Lv77); Gastra (Lv20); Cynthia (Lv1); Orc King (Bui) (Lv82)
Abnormal Status	Blessing of the One-Eyed Snake; Protection of the Twin-Headed Snake

The patrolling goblins who were also in charge of securing food ran to me with bubbles coming out of their mouth.

“Your Highness, a great horde of goblins is coming from the south!”

As soon I received that report, I took flamberge out and ran.

“Gi Ga! Fei! Gather your men now!”

As I led the remaining goblins of the fortress, I remembered that the Gaidga and the Paradua goblins were situated in the south.

The Gaidga perhaps, but there was no way Paradua would forget to inform us that an

enemy horde was coming.

The fact they weren't able to could only mean that they've been surrounded or...

I hope they're safe.

As I prayed for their safety, the enemy horde came to view and I tightened my grip on my great sword.

About 50 meters from where I stood was a great horde. A lone goblin stepped out of it, and as soon as I saw that goblin's face, I was shocked.

As I approached that duke class goblin, he drew his long sword and thrust it into the ground, then he got on one knee, bowed his head, and extended his arms in front of his chest with his right hand closed and fit into his open left hand. It was his unique way of expressing his gratitude.

"I have returned, Your Highness!"

When the goblin horde saw Gi Gu Verbena kneel, they all knelt before me.

The sight of all the goblins kneeling before me was the fruits of Gi Go's hard work. He has literally put together a great horde and brought it back with him.

When Fei and his elven warriors arrived, they cried in surprise. Meanwhile, Gi Ga and his horde let out a great cheer.

"Gi Gu Verbena," I called.

"Yes, my lord!" He said.

"You've conquered the south?" I asked.

"As you have commanded, Your Majesty," he replied.

When I realized the extent of Gi Gu's accomplishment, I inadvertently narrowed my eyes.

"Is there anything you wish?" I asked.

“There is no greater reward than to be able to help his majesty in his path to world domination,” he replied.

“Then I shall give you command over the first army of the coming war. I will be expecting great things from you.”

“As you command, my liege. I will do my best to not shame your name,” Gi Gu said as I nodded, but then he brought another subject up. “Your Majesty, actually, I’ve brought a present.”

“Oh?” I said.

As Gi Gu signaled his subordinates, they brought out some humans wrapped in reeds.

“My liege, I present to you a human we found in the southern region. I thought he might be of some service to his highness.”

Several humans were brought before me, a vine firmly wrapped around their mouths in place of a ball gag. Altogether, there were three men and one woman. They looked unlike any human I’ve seen, and the clothes they wore were too extravagant for a band of travelers.

They could simply be rich people, or perhaps merchants, but... Isn’t their skin a bit too pale?

“Did these people have any luggage with them?”

“No, we acquired them after exterminating a race known as ‘killer ants’. I don’t believe there was anything of the sort.”

I looked at the humans once more.

Their pale faces were stricken with horror. When I looked under their robes, I found that they were in possession of some bracelets, some ornaments they burned time on, and a book.

It’s a pity that I couldn’t read, but from the way these people reacted, it would seem that this book was the most important of their belongings.

We're not getting anywhere like this.

"Undo that man's gag," I commanded.

I had the slender man with the most extravagant clothing on him to be sat before me.

"You are—" I couldn't even finish my sentence before the man started yapping.

"How dare you people treat me like this!?" The man said, causing the long-armed goblins to surround him and pin him down.

"I am the cardinal of Cultidian, Benem Nemush! Monsters who do not fear god! Know that the gravity of your sins wi—"

Unable to withstand the man's jeers any longer, the goblins hit the man, causing his jeers to turn into screams instantly.

I glanced at the goblins, signaling them to stop, and they fearfully bowed in compliance.

I spoke to the man. "Unfortunately, who you are is no business of mine. You are now within our lands. Your laws, your logic... none of them have any power here. Prepare yourself."

Nemush and the rest of the humans looked down on the ground as their bodies shook in fear.

"Gi Gu, you have brought me something interesting. I will be sure to reward you properly for this one day," I said.

"...Yes, my lord!"

I ordered the humans to be brought to a nearby village.

I figure it would be easier to talk if they were brought there instead of the fortress.

Besides, there's no reason for us to give them free information.

After I left Gi Ga in charge of the fortress during my absence, I dismissed the mobilization order I'd sent out, then I took Fei and Gi Gu with me to the Gaidga village.



Presently, we were in the middle of an 'interrogation', or at least that's what I would have called our current activity, but this self-proclaimed cardinal has been running his mouth from the start.

Apparently, this man was a follower of the Kushain faith, and was on his way to the free cities in the south to attend the conclave that would decide their next patriarch.

I asked him why he was walking in the middle of a forest like this, and apparently, his faith was so great that he believed that the monsters would not attack him. Moreover, the other cardinals seemed to have coaxed him to pull off this crazy stunt.

According to the other humans, this man, Nemush, was of particularly high rank, and was even close to the position of patriarch. He was currently in fierce competition with two other candidates.

Supporters of Kushain were particularly numerous among the free cities or the city states. Especially, the agricultural northern city states.

"What will you do once you've become the patriarch?" I asked.

"That's not really a topic to be had with a lesser life form, but fine! When I become the patriarch, I shall call for a holy war! A crusade!"

Oh?

Nemush' eyes gleamed a tranced light as he spoke of his plans, and I looked coldly at him as I listened.

"The free cities of the south who do not acknowledge Kushain shall know the might of Kushain!"

I talked with these humans for one week.

There were some among them who were too scared to talk to me, but that was easily

settled when I introduced the elf, Fei, to them.

Appearances really does matter, it seems.

It was doubtful that the humans were all telling the truth, but one thing was certain, the state of the free cities of the south.

The free cities were divided into two: the agricultural north and the south that traded with it. These city states have made their own alliances, creating a framework of sort that was known as the free city state county, but unification was still a long way away.

The north had kings, while the south had republics and many citizens. The north followed the teaching of Kushain, while the south worshipped the god of the desert, Ashunasan. Speaking of which, Kushain is apparently the name of a sage who once lived and is a monotheistic religion.

Moreover, aside from cultural and religious differences, the south traded with Germion Kingdom through Shushunu Holy Kingdom, even though the Germion Kingdom was currently pressuring the northern city states.

“I see...” I muttered as I listened to Fei’s report.

I drew a map within my head as I sought to place the current position of the Forest of Darkness.

Will we make it before the conclave the starts? I wonder.

“Fei, elven metal is precious even among humans, right?” I asked.

“Yes. Why do you ask?” Fei said.

This sort of scheming doesn’t suit me, but there shouldn’t be any harm in scattering some seeds.

“Could I personally borrow some?” I asked.

Fei’s eyes narrowed.

“...That is not a decision one would expect from the wise King of Goblins. Those people

do not have the forbearance that could make others acknowledge them. If you are intent on supporting them, we may have to rethink our relationship.”

Wise, huh. I feel that’s not really an adjective you put on goblins, but whatever...

“Putting it bluntly, there isn’t a hunter who would let his prey off when it willingly offers its head,” I said.

“Are you saying you can use them?” Fei asked.

“The more incompetent leaders there are, the easier my path will be,” I said. “Fei, though my heart yearns for danger, I will still charge on even if the wall has already collapsed.”

“...I understand. We elves shall give our support as we always have.”

Fei bowed and I nodded.

Now then, entertaining a fool is a hassle, but...



In the wide premises where the soldiers trained, 500 soldiers lined up so tightly that not even a drill could bore a hole in their formation.

Ever since the plan to fight the goblins in 2 years was decided, the feudal lord of the west, Gowen Ranid, has been gathering every soldiers he could muster to create his western army anew.

As Gowen divided the platoons, he looked down on the young soldiers and spoke loudly so they could hear him.

“Last year, our army suffered many losses and failed to invade the forest!”

The eyes of the young soldiers all gathered on the western feudal lord who stood imposingly.

“In the forest dwells monsters that are beyond our wildest imaginations. They stand in the way of progress. Moreover, should the day come when they leave the forest, they

will surely raze your fields to the ground, kill your friends, take away your sisters and mothers, and kill your father and brothers!”

Gowen’s spirit bore down on these young soldiers as they listened with rapt attention.

“Stand tall, Soldiers! Yesterday, you were cowards! But from this day forth, you will be heroes! Guardians of this country! You will be given food! You will be given a weapon and armor! All of which have been paid for by the taxes paid by your parents! Therefore, you must win!”

There were some among the soldiers who cried. Their lives weren’t easy. It was precisely because of that that they aspired to be soldiers.

“Defeat the monsters and bring home victory!”

“To victory!” The crowd responded.

After distributing the soldiers to their platoons, they would be given training by their senior soldiers.

After seeing that everything was in order, the cold gleam returned to Gowen’s eyes and he returned to his office.

He dealt with the paperwork at a frightening pace, but when he came across one certain document, he suddenly stopped. It was a highly classified document that has been sealed with the imperial mark.

Gowen’s cheeks loosened a bit when he glanced through that document.

“Approximately, 400 soldiers at the capital.”

That was the number of reinforcements that could be sent in the coming year as soon as preparations were completed. Moreover, the holy knight Shivara might even make an appearance; the Ripper Knight, that was a holy knight who loved battles so much that he wouldn’t be satisfied unless he led the charge. Not to mention, Gulland still owed him from the last battle.

“At most, we should have somewhere near 2000...”

Though Gowen said 2000, that was a number only achievable by gathering every single soldier from colonia and his fief. It wasn't very realistic. 1,800 was a more realistic figure.

There was a bit too many he had to protect.

That being the case, an attack would be best. But if he did attack, how should he go about it?

If the enemy base was that deserted town from before, he could try cutting away the forest until he reached it.

Alternatively, he could try and provoke the goblins out of the forest, then stop them with colonia (colonial city). He could use the reinforcements from colonia to catch the enemy in a surround, cutting off all paths of retreat, allowing him to completely annihilate the enemy in one go.

But, no... That Goblin King probably won't be fooled. It was doubtful he would move exactly as Gowen wished.

Considering there was someone who tried to attack during the night before, there was no such thing as being too careful. Another card Gowen could play was to temporarily abandon colonia, then trap the enemy within their territory, leaving them ripe for the chopping block.

But could the citizens endure such a plan?

In the vast plains, mobility was key. But unfortunately, Gowen was yet to find someone who could replace the late cavalry commander, Corseo. Gowen would prefer that everything went perfectly, but... With their current cavalry inexperienced, the deciding factor would end up being the weapons created by the craftsmen.

Until enough was gathered, he would have to be thorough with the defense. Fortunately, the magicians given him by the king has greatly sped up colonia's progress.

If he could only have those mages under his direct command, he could have his very own sorcerer cavalry (mana guard) just like the eastern Holy Shushunu Kingdom, but unfortunately, they belonged to the king.

With the situation at hand, he had no choice but to rely on his old tactics.

“My lord, please excuse me,” a voice said.

When Gowen looked up, a clerk was before him.

“State your business,” Gowen said.

“It’s... last time’s...” the man said.

Gowen’s eyes grew sharp.

Some religious groups have been wandering about in his territory lately. They tried to persuade his citizens to believe in just one god, and they even told him that everything would go fine as long as he contributed to their faith.

“...Let him come,” Gowen said.

Sensing that his tone was heavier than normal, a chill crawled up the clerk’s back.

When the person of the Kushain faith entered, he started running his mouth passionately without even waiting for Gowen to say anything.

No matter how splendid his god was, or how weak the other gods were, or whether this was a sin or not, the moment Gowen heard his request, he curtly replied. “You may not loiter in my territory. If I hear you ask the same worthless request again, at that time, it’ll be your head.”

The person from the Kushain faith complained, but when he tried to chase after Gowen, he suddenly heard the sound of him sheathing his sword.

“Huh?” The religious person asked.

Gowen obliged and pointed to his fingers. When he looked down, he noted that his fingers were gone.

“...Huh!? E-Eeek!”

At first questioning, but when understanding came, pain settled in and the religious person fell to the floor.

Gowen approached the trembling man and slowly waved his sword, then he pointed it at his throat.

“I won’t say it again. Hurry up and get lost,” Gowen said.

After that Gowen called the government officials over and had them pick up the fallen fingers, then he sent out an edict.

“The Kushain faith is heresy. They will not be welcomed in my territory.”

They trembled and nodded as Gowen’s voice resounded.

“Also, this might be unnecessary, but inform the capital as well. Tell them that our country has no need for monotheism. We are a people protected by many gods!”

—142 days until the war with the humans.

INTERMISSION

ONE THOUSAND LI TO THE NORTH, A MEETING AT DAWN

Status	
Name	Gi Go Amatsuki
Race	Goblin
Level	2
Class	Duke; Wandering Swordsman
Possessed Skills	Sword Mastery A-; Purple Flash; Forsake; Sense; Discern; A Master Swordsman's Proof; Silent Nature; Veteran
Divine Protection	Sword God
Attributes	None
Subordinate Beasts	None
Abnormal Status	Sworn to Spare; Sworn God's Control

Beyond the cave full of glowing moss, where the light of the fire god's body shone brilliantly up in the sky, the former slave, Yoshu's, eyes were blinded by the great light.

He implored the goblin walking ahead of him, Gi Go Amatsuki, to stop, but the goblin waved him off.

"It's fine," the goblin said.

Seeing the goblin walk unguarded, Yoshu followed after him as he thought of a plan in case things turned for the worst.

"Lord Gi Go!"

A great horde of beasts was accompanying a goblin that looked to be a noble class.

From what Yoshu recalled, this goblin was none other than Mr. Gi Gi.

Beasts of all sorts frolicked about around him.

Yoshu asked if it was safe, and Gi Go told him it was with a glance.

“Normally, people would be a bit more surprised, but...” Yoshu said.

When Yoshu got a closer look, he noticed that there were some monkey-like animals mixed with the horde who would either feed the young or scratch each others backs. It was a peaceful scene; at least, as long as he did not look through those lenses called prejudice that humans had of beasts.

Gi Go received something from Gi Gi, then they bid each other farewell.

Yoshu wasn't close to Gi Gi, so he quickly followed after Gi Go.

“You sure are close,” Yoshu remarked as they followed a distinct beast trail up to the north, most probably a trail left by Gi Gi's beast horde.

“Our relationship is actually one where we're one misstep away from killing each other,” Gi Go said.

“Didn't look like that to me...” Yoshu said.

“...Before I met the king a kind of beast known as 'gray wolf' wreaked havoc on my turf,” Gi Go said.

Yoshu and the goblin walked while paying attention to their surroundings.

“Half the horde had been done in and we couldn't hunt. We were left with only two choices: either starve to death or eat each other. But then the king came.”

Gi Go's voice was heavy. Was that regret weighing upon him or something else? Yoshu did not know.

“Hungry and weak, I was mercilessly beaten by Gi Gi and Gi Gu. I didn't even have the opportunity to stand before the king,” Gi Go said.

“It was vexing, wasn't it?” Yoshu asked.

“...Perhaps,” Gi Go said.

As they continued along their path, their feet began to make slushing sounds.

“Since that day I’ve been keeping something locked up within me. That something was with me even on that day I gave Gi Go food as proof of our friendship...”

Gi Go continued talking, but as he did, Yoshu was more and more surprised.

The sword is my way of life.

Yoshu had always believed Gi Go to be completely devoted to the sword.

But now... It seemed that this goblin was actually more human than he ever imagined.

The atmosphere along the way was so heavy that Yoshu even stopped feeling his legs as he walked.

Perhaps this was the reason why Gi Go was taken by the Sword God’s madness.

“A swamp,” Gi Go said as he looked down.

In the dimly lit forest that remained dim despite the body of the fire god shining from the sky was a swamp abundant with strange water plants.

It didn’t seem they would be able to cross.

“Shall we go around?” Yoshu suggested.

There was more than one path to the north.

After leaving the forest, the northern mountains of the snow god that blocked the heavens came to view.



The body of the fire god had yet to set, but they were making camp already. The dark of the night was irrelevant to goblins, but to a human like Yoshu, it was a difficult time to work. Normally, the twin red moon sisters would light the dark sky during the black

of the night god, but unfortunately, the clouds today veiled their light.

Gradually, the god of the night and his household's goddesses began to stretch their wings.

Yoshu looked hatefully at the oppressive clouds that covered the sky.

It seemed like it might rain, so they decided to make camp at the border of the forest and the plains. Yoshu would always put up a cloth between the trees to protect themselves from the watch of the night birds, but today, he added another layer.

After setting up the tent, Yoshu gathered some aged branches and lit them up.

It wasn't easy because of all the vegetation growing, but Yoshu made sure to pick a camping site that was slightly sloped. After all, it would be horrible if it flooded and they were swept away while they were sleeping.

"This should do," Yoshu said as he finished making camp.

In the same moment – almost as if Gi Go was waiting – Gi Go came out of the thickets with two big eyes in hand.

The pattern of a giant eye drawn on the birds' feathers looked menacing as it seemed to look straight at Yoshu, but he ignored it and spoke to Gi Go.

"Looks like you caught a lot today," Yoshu said.

"There seems to be a lot in these parts," Gi Go said.

Yoshu took the prey from Gi Go and strangled them.

After killing the beasts, Yoshu started gutting them. He had already gotten used to the whole process, so much so that his hands moved even without thinking.

After lopping off the heads of the big eyes and draining their blood, Yoshu started plucking their feathers and removing the internal organs.

The big eyes stored poison within them, and any human that ingested it would be out with a high fever for a few days. The goblins and the orcs had a natural resistance to

it, however.

To adventurers the biggest reason for gutting these big eyes was to get the monster crystal that sometimes crystallized within.

Of the beasts that had monster crystals inside of them, the big eyes were relatively weaker, making them a prime choice for adventurers.

Of course, the amount of magic crystals inside them was also less, making the rewards smaller, but to the adventurers who were struggling to get by, the big eyes were an indispensable source of income.

“I’m not an adventurer though...” Yoshu muttered.

Yoshu wiped the monster crystal clean and stored it in his bag. He couldn’t just leave it on the ground as it might attract other beasts.

He ran his knife along the bones, cutting off the meat of the beast, then he took a sharpened rod, pierced the meat with it, and cooked it over fire.

The fragrant scent of meat being cooked was accompanied by the sound of fat bursting.

The sight of a little fat falling into the flames as the meat was cooked greatly whet Yoshu’s appetite.

As a finishing touch, Yoshu took the rock salt he got from the village a few days ago and shaved it with a knife, then he sprinkled some on the meat.

“I’ll have one,” Gi Go said as he excitedly bit into the meat. Sounds of juice slushing resounded as the juice of the meat filled Gi Go’s mouth. Some of it even spilled onto the ground.

“Delicious,” Gi Go said.

“I’m glad you like it,” Yoshu said, smiling a little, then he started eating.

Contrast the crunchy exterior, the meat inside was soft and his teeth was easily able to tear it apart.

“Yep, it’s good alright,” Yoshu said as he nodded with satisfaction.

It’s often said that people will naturally smile when eating good food. It seems that was true indeed, even for goblins.

After eating Yoshu started teaching Gi Go how to sing. He had promised him some time ago, but it was too dangerous in the dungeon, so he had postponed it until now.

“What kind of songs do you like? Songs for battle, perhaps?” Yoshu asked.

There were all sorts of songs. There were songs that spoke of one’s homeland, ones that spoke of the seasons, ones that spoke of love, or extolled bravery or even spoke of war.

It was a rare sight to see Gi Go ponder on something, but when he finally opened his mouth, he asked Yoshu to teach him a song that thought back to one’s home.

“That’s unexpected,” Yoshu remarked.

“Really? I’m always fighting, so I can say I know war, but a place to go back to? There’s only one such place now... So, if there is a song that talks about home, I’d like to know it,” Gi Go explained.

“A place to go back to, huh?” Yoshu said.

Did he have that? Yoshu wondered.

Closing his eyes, he saw the image of his older sister appear.

Yoshu wryly smiled at that.

I’m alright, sis. I’m doing a lot better than expected.

Yoshu wryly smiled at his worrying sister, then he cleared his throat and began to sing.

“Can you remember the old lands? O winds of the vast sky, take these feelings with you. I wonder if the water flowing in the rivers came from the rain in the old lands. Mother mountain, snowy mountain, misty mountains of the north.

(Kyanmarordo rinbaru habekasutoria vesjinichi ukeru habeireria kyanrashiruudo chiukeinrei. Dinarashir, yuuguranshiru, iryunoshisurashiru.)”

Gi Go quietly listened as Yoshu sang.

“When I turn around I see the path back home. Friends of a strange land, won’t you scatter my ashes on the mountains of my homeland, where I can no longer return? In that land whose air I breathed growing up. In that land whose rain I cried under and whose snow I kicked and ran. Mother mountain, snowy mountain, misty mountains of the north.

(hadomerieddo kyanroroodo rao ishuneyuuga. Ragiirakyanmibadia. Nonmuukyandou. Katouraragiirun, uauwa, yuguerin. Dinarashiru, yuuguranshiru, iryunoshisurashiru.)”

Though goblins couldn’t cry, the mournful melody left its mark on Gi Go’s heart.

“...A good song,” Gi Go remarked.

“Yes, a good song indeed,” Yoshu agreed.

Yoshu wryly smiled as he sat before the flames thinking of his sister.



As they walked further up north, the temperature gradually grew lower and the mountains of the snow god became bigger. Because the winds blew down from the mountains, the cold they felt was colder than the actual temperature of the area. This sort of wind was popularly known as the breath of Yggrasil (snow god). It was because of it that this land remained cool even in the heat of summer, making it a treasure trove of produce that could only grow in the cold.

The traveling pair of goblin and human looked at the large fields as they passed them by. These fields were so big that Yoshu himself couldn’t help but grow wide eyed. In fact, the fields were so big they were a lot closer to a city than a simple town.

The bigger the village, the more people there were and the more shops there were. A bigger town was usually preferable as far travelers were concerned, but when Yoshu

thought of Gi Go, he thought a small town would be better instead.

While Yoshu was worrying about that, Gi Go was particularly taken by the white thing coming out of his mouth.

“What’s the matter?” Yoshu asked.

“Something white is coming out of my mouth,” Gi Go said.

Yoshu couldn’t understand what Gi Go was talking about, so the goblin exhaled deeply to show him what he meant.

“What’s happening to my body?” Gi Go asked anxiously.

“That’s pretty normal though,” Yoshu said, then he took a deep breath and exhaled as well, drawing a white puff of breath in the space before his mouth.

“But this has never happened before,” Gi Go said.

When Gi Go said that, Yoshu finally understood.

“Ahh, could it be this is your first time visiting a cold place?” Yoshu asked.

“Cold? Ahh, it’s indeed colder here,” Gi Go said.

Yoshu wryly smiled and patted him on the shoulder. “Don’t worry about it. It’s normal for that white thing to come out in cold places.”

Since this was Gi Go’s first time, he’s probably never seen snow either. Yoshu secretly anticipated how Gi Go would react once he saw it.

“Hmm...” As for Gi Go, since the only thing that changed was the color of his breath, he stopped bothering himself about it and followed after Yoshu.

When it was almost time for them to make camp, Yoshu spotted a village. It was a little big, but it wasn’t the sort of village soldiers would station themselves in.

It was a wealthy village.

“Luck seems to be on our side today. We might be able to stay here,” Yoshu said.

“Hmm...” Gi Go agreed without paying much attention as his eyes darted to and fro his surroundings.

When Yoshu started to leave him behind, he followed after him.



After negotiating for a while, Gi Go and Yoshu were able to successfully stay at the village chief's place. The negotiations went as usual. Yoshu did the talking, while Gi Go quietly waited with his features covered by a long robe.

“I don't think I can ever get used to human houses,” Gi Go said.

After entering the chief's stable, Gi Go took off his robe and laid himself over the straw bed. He ignored the frightened horses as he slept with his sword in hand.

Goblins might be able to move freely be it day or night, but it was still important that he remained alert at all times. And though his body was a lot tougher than Yoshu's, making him significantly less tired despite having to walk an entire day without rest, Gi Go still felt some fatigue.

When it came to fatigue, there was no better treatment than sleep.

“...Hmm.”

Gi Go closed his eyes, eager to greet slumber land, but for some reason its doors refused to open.

He was tired, so he definitely needed to sleep, but then he thought back to that thing that caught his attention before entering the village.

There were several beings around the village. The feeling he sensed from those beings was much like the greed he felt from orcs when they hunted their prey. But this was a human village. Could it be that even a place like this wasn't free of such things?

Gi Go tried to shake the thought away.

But no matter how hard he tried, sleep wouldn't come.

It wasn't easy for a goblin to ignore threat when he knows he's being threatened. For a goblin to ignore a threat was to go against instinct itself.

If one is being targeted, then one should run.

If the enemy is weaker, then that enemy should be defeated.

There was no such thing as 'waiting'.

And so, Gi Go stood up and walked out into the black of the night god covered in the darkness of the goddess of darkness.

"Where are you going?" A voice called out to him from behind.

When he turned around, it was Yoshu.

"You were awake?" Gi Go asked.

"I don't fall asleep easily," Yoshu explained with a wry smile, though he already had a shield on his back and a sword in hand.

"Good then. There's an enemy. Come with me for a bit," Gi Go said.

"Good grief," Yoshu complained. He still followed Gi Go, however.

When they got out, what greeted them was a group of bandits and neighing horses.

"This is what you'd call a bandit group," Yoshu explained.

Yoshu couldn't help but smile faintly when he realized there were about 50 of them all in all.

"That's a lot," Gi Go said.

"Yeah, but bandits aren't really about numbers," Yoshu said.

As Yoshu took out his shield, he drew his sword.

“I don’t sense anyone strong, but with this many, it shouldn’t be too boring,” Gi Go said.

Goblins were friends of the dark. Gi Go could see perfectly clear even without the torches that illuminated the area. As for Yoshu, he found the torches convenient for sizing up the enemy.

“Amateurs,” Yoshu said with a cruel smile as he hid under the shadow of a building and searched his shield for a dagger.

When the bandits began to ride over the fences, he threw it at them.

The dagger smoothly cut through the air as it penetrated a man’s throat. In the blink of an eye, without even leaving an opportunity to cry in death, one bandit fell from his horse.

Yoshu threw a few more daggers.

The bandits did not fail to notice the oddity of the situation, and they looked for the person responsible for the death of their comrades. When they pinpointed Yoshu’s location, they charged straight at him.

“You’re asking to die!” A bandit yelled as he and his men rode for Yoshu.

Yoshu, however, didn’t seem to mind as he threw three more daggers to claim three more lives, but it wasn’t enough to stop the bandits’ charge.

Yoshu ran into the stable to avoid the bandits from chasing him with their horses.

As a result, the bandits surrounded the stable.

“You bastards dare have a hard time with this rat!?” The biggest of the bandits spat. He said that in the same moment Yoshu shrugged his shoulders.

“These flames I offer to you! (Burning Sword)” Yoshu chanted.

Flames wrapped around the sword in his hands, making it look like it was struck by lightning as the fire ran through it. The sword in his hands was now sharper and stronger than ever.

“Careful now,” Yoshu said.

As the battle commenced within the stable, Yoshu was able to dodge the attacks by a hair’s breadth. Unfortunately, there were too many bandits, making it harder and harder for him to dodge.

—This is bad!

When Yoshu couldn’t dodge any longer, he braced himself for pain.

But the pain never came, and instead, a curved sword was brandished before him, stopping the blade of the enemy.

“Mr. Gi Go! What about the bandits on your side?” Yoshu asked with both relief and anticipation.

“They’ve been dealt with,” Gi Go replied.

The plan was for Gi Go to take care of the bandits that tried to run away from the entrance, but it seems he had managed to finish his part sooner. The robe Gi Go wore had already been cut up because of the battle.

Without the robe’s hood concealing his face, the bandits could clearly see his face.

“M-Monster!” They cried.

Unfortunately, their fear only made them easy pickings for Yoshu and Gi Go, who mercilessly struck them down one after another. Whenever Gi Go swung his sword, the bandits would lose their arms and fall over, while Yoshu’s sword was so sharp it could penetrate even their armor.

“S-Save us!” The bandits cried as they ran.

When dawn came, most of them had either been killed or captured.

Yoshu and Gi Go handed them to the village people.

The villagers screamed when they saw Gi Go, but Yoshu calmed them down by

explaining that he was an honest monster swordsman.

The villagers were deeply grateful to Yoshu and Gi Go, so they paid them some money. They even gave them some fur coats and winter shoes to stave off the cold when they found out they were headed to the snow god's mountains. They also gave them some preserved food and fire spirit stones that could light a fire even without any branches.

Yoshu and Gi Go thanked the villagers, then they headed further up to the north.



Gi Go could not get used to the sensation he felt from his feet. From the moment he was born until adulthood, he has never worn a pair of shoes. To make things worse, the snow-covered land would cave ever step he took.

"Tsk... It's hard to move here," Gi Go said.

He tried swinging his curved sword, but it was difficult to control his weight in these snow-covered lands. The more strength he put in his feet, the further his feet sunk into the snow.

Gi Go's dislike for shoes only grew worse under this situation. Not only was he unable to keep a firm posture, his feet were even caged in a small object. That being said, he couldn't just remove them either. After all, even goblins were susceptible to frostbite.

"Nuu..." Though puzzled, Gi Go tried swinging his sword again.

Try and try as he might, however, he could not swing his sword as he pleased. There was supposedly a savage tribe here known as Yugushiva. From what he knew, they were a worthy opponent. But no matter how worthy they were, if he couldn't fight properly, he wouldn't be satisfied even in death.

"Mr. Gi Go, it seems a blizzard is coming. We should rest inside this cave," Yoshu said.

When the body of the fire god was at its peak, Yoshu happened to find a cave in the mountains. He proposed to stay there.

"That would probably be for the best," Gi Go agreed.

Leaving his winter equipment in the black cave that contrasted the snowy land, Gi Go began immersing himself in his sword once more. He has never experienced an environment where it was so difficult to swing his sword.

He sought to find an answer within as he swung his sword ceaselessly through the air.

A white breath left his mouth and vanished.

The trees were covered in snow, and the snowy lands that would usually appear rocky and uneven appeared perfectly level because of the snow. Gradually, the sun set and the clouds were cut apart by the powerful winds.

When the sun had gone far toward the west, clouds began to fill the sky.

“Hmm? Oh?”

When lumps of white began to fall from the sky, Gi Go curiously reached out for them, only for them to vanish in his sword-scarred hands.

“So this is snow,” he muttered.

The falling snow greatly fascinated Gi Go, but the winds gradually grew stronger, and the breath of the snow god began to breathe down from above, chilling Gi Go.

“Mr. Gi Go, aren’t you going to eat?” Yoshu asked.

The once gentle snow had turned into a vicious weapon as they struck Gi Go on the cheeks.

Gi Go turned his back on the blizzard and entered the cave.

The next day, the sky was blue again. A man and a goblin packed up their belongings and left their cave. The cold of the wind would brush against their skin and a white cloud would exhale from their mouths as they climbed up the mountain.

By this time, Gi Go had finally gotten used to walking in the snow.

But just when Gi Go thought they would finally reach the summit, a person appeared before them.

The person wore a mask and had silver hair that fluttered in the air. The person wore a white fur coat and carried a curved sword just as big or perhaps bigger than Gi Go's.

That person swung his sword with a reverse grip.

The moment Gi Go saw that, he called out to Yoshu.

"From above!" He said.

Although they were on snowy lands, that person ran so quickly that it seemed like he was jumping.

The person ran with open hostility, but Gi Go welcomed him with a ferocious laugh.

"Yoshu, keep your head down!"

Gi Go stepped forward and brandished his curved sword to meet the enemy's blade. Despite being on snowy lands, the enemy jumped easily, leaving a spray of snow as he unsheathed his sword and slashed down on him.

"Ronto, rio!" The enemy yelled in the northern language, drawing the curtains on their duel.

"NUuuOOO!" Gi Go met the enemy's blade with his own.

Though the snow sought to shackle him, Gi Go returned the enemy's blade.

The enemy was no slouch, however, and he used the momentum from having his blade returned to nimbly flip in the sky and easily regain his footing despite the snow.

In the unsinking snow lands was a powerful foe that fluttered like a butterfly.

A fierce smile appeared on Gi Go's lips.

It was a smile reminiscent of his days when he was a mere starving monster.

"A worthy foe. Come, let's fight!"

On that day, they met a yugushiva (snow demon).



Yoshu's level has risen.

58.

CHAPTER 151

RITE OF PASSAGE

We left the Gaidga village and saw the cardinal Nemush until the border of the Forest of Darkness.

I left the monsters we encountered along the way to Gi Gu Verbena and his southern goblins, while Fei and I were completely focused on gathering as much information as we could.

Cardinal Nemush was headed to a city state of the northern part of the free cities known as Banen Kingdom. Apparently, they pick their king by election.

Being also the headquarters of the Kushain faith, it seemed to be a country deeply devoted to religion.

Apparently, the influence of the church there was so great that Nemush went as far as to say that without the adherents there would be no people.

“Don’t you have a king?” I asked.

Nemush laughed with a sneer as he said the king wasn’t a problem.

“The king himself is a follower of the Kushain faith. Moreover, not even the king himself can meet the patriarch just because he wishes to!” Nemush said.

I don’t know if he’s being talkative because he looks down on me for being a monster or simply because that’s how he is. Of course, there’s still a possibility that he’s lying, but I don’t think anyone is capable of coming up with such a complicated lie.

It’s a pity the evil eye of the one-eyed snake can’t discern truth from lie.

Because of that I have no choice but to rely on my own skills. It’s inconvenient, but when I think about how relying on a skill won’t get me that far anyway, I feel better.

I still haven’t found a path to victory. For now, there’s no choice but to fumble my way through.

We spent about 10 days all-in-all gathering information from Nemush, and then we finally arrived at the southern end of the forest.

There, a rocky desert of a wasteland where the air shimmered in heat and the hot sand scorched greeted us.

It was faint, but I could see the city-state from the distance.

“This is as far as we go,” I said.

We haven’t even fully understood the forest yet. Going out into the desert now was far too early. First, we must strengthen our stronghold.

“Before you go, take these with you. It’s a farewell gift. Let it pay your travel expenses and serve as a tribute to that god you speak of.”

I spoke as haughtily as I could to further cement my image as a foolish monster king to Nemush.

“So the teachings of Kushain can reach even monsters... Are you writing this down?” Nemush said to the other believers with him.

They must have been recording something, as the believers quickly wrote down something with a feather pen.

“I will gift you another treasure when you come to the forest again. I wish to pay respects to that god of yours,” I said insincerely. I could barely keep myself from grinning.

If this man could gain power and wreak havoc in the south, the power of the humans will dwindle.

“I don’t think a monster could ever understand the teachings of Kushain, but at the very least, I’ll pray for you to have a peaceful death,” Nemush said.

“Farewell,” I said.

A peaceful death, huh. I couldn’t help but sneer at the thought as I turned heel.

Who wants a peaceful death?

What I want is to suffer and suffer more, a thorny road covered in blood.

I chose to walk such a path. Damn a peaceful death.

On the other side of all the pain and suffering, beyond the endless wars... What awaits me is probably...



We took the same amount of time to return to the Fortress of the Abyss. When we got back, Kuzan's representative, Yellow, was waiting for us. I'd sent Kuzan to the elven school, so Yellow had to take over the search of the Fortress of the Abyss.

The old goblin and Yellow seemed to be working together, as they welcomed us together upon our return.

"My king, word has come from the elf, Lord Felbi," the old goblin said.

The old goblin was in charge of the young and female goblins, and was unusually wise for a goblin.

It seems Felbi, Pale, Selena, and Shumea have all successfully infiltrated the western region. They've become adventurers to earn a living and are currently on their way to visit various places.

The west was under the rule of the soldier, Gowen Ranid. That should be the same man who swore a treaty with me.

It's doubtful that he's willing to keep that treaty, however, as he has been gathering and training a significant number of soldiers. In fact, he's apparently even willing to name an unknown adventurer an officer depending on his abilities. He's really thought things through.

It seems I'm not the only one who's been strengthening his forces and looking to expand territory.

“Forget the treaty. Is he planning on attacking?” I asked.

“So a war can’t be avoided after all,” Fei said.

“This land is too small for two rulers,” I said.

Those who seek power will naturally collide with others with similar intentions. Besides, even if I did cut my ambitions short by only protecting this forest, one day, the humans will surely attack us anyway to feed themselves.

Hence, there can only be one path for me to take.

Capture the human kingdom, wage war against the world, and carve my existence into history.

“There’s more,” the old goblin said.

The next part of the message was closer to hearsay than something concrete. Word has it that the new leader of the Eastern Holy Shushunu Kingdom’s sorcerer cavalry has been decided. There has also been news of a contagious disease spreading in the northern mountains of the snow god and Germion Kingdom paying large sums to any who can use healing magic. Finally, the conclave of the Kushain faith has apparently been opened.

It seems Nemush wasn’t lying after all. It’s curious what effects he’ll have, but there’s no telling until after I see it for myself.

“The enemy having a lot of healers is a problem,” I said.

Ever since Reshia was kidnapped, we’ve had no choice but to recover our injuries through natural methods. Goblins reproduce faster and heal faster than humans, but compared to the powers of healing magic, those are nothing.

I don’t know what the average effect of healing is, but if there are a lot of Reshias on the enemy’s side, the battle will prove to be difficult.

“On the other hand, no one would expect the goblins to have any healers,” Fei pointed out.

I asked if the elves had any healers, and apparently, they had ways to speed up the recovery process but none to instantly recover from one's injuries.

"The undine might have some, however," Fei said.

Unfortunately, relations between the sylphs and the undine have been cut off due to the expansion of humanity. Getting their support before the next battle is unlikely.

I don't know if it's because the humans are inherently weak that they have developed more advanced healing magic, but regardless, that's one big point in their favor.

From the map, the undine should be situated east of the Holy Shushunu Kingdom. With that distance and the current speed of communications, it won't be easy to reach out to them.

I don't think reaching out to them will change much, but it's still better than not doing anything.

"Tell Felbi to continue communications," I said.

"As you will," the old goblin replied. "Speaking of which, Your Majesty, the paddock seem to have been completed."

I'd asked the ancient beast tamer, Gi Gi Orudo, and the papirsag who are used to raising animals to build a paddock similar to the orcs.

I asked them to fill it with relatively tame animals, and as it turns out, they chose the triple boar.

"Isn't that a monster?" I asked, causing Gi Gi to meekly nod while Luther of the papirsag nodded with satisfaction.

According to Luther, the triple boars were relatively tame despite being a monster. And as long as they were given enough land and their young weren't touched, they could be raised easily.

Come to think of it, even beginner beast tamers are able to control them, so they should indeed be tame.

Sensing my anxiety, Gi Gi spoke. “Your Majesty, it is precisely because we beast tamers come into contact with monsters that we are able to train ourselves. We put our lives by doing so, but without it, we cannot grow.”

I glanced at Gi Gi, who was bowing deeply.

Somehow, I feel like I learned something new today.

Indeed, I might have been acting too cautious. The goblins need to learn to fend for themselves. I can’t baby them forever. And for beast tamers, handling beasts – or rather, monsters – is how they grow.

Even if they fail, they’ll be able to come up with new techniques as they fumble their way through.

“Very well then. Gi Gi, Luther, I grant you permission to do as you please,” I said.

After dismissing them, I listened to the rest of the reports.

The report from Gi Ji Arsil’s scouts; the report from the knight goblin, Gi Ga Rax, on the progress of the young goblins’ training; the report of the harpy, Yushika, on the progress of the inns and the roads. It wasn’t possible to manage everything, so I was only taking the reports of those close to me, but there was still a lot of work to be done.

I need to hurry up and establish my retainers’ organization.

I glanced at Fei, and he tilted his head in confusion.

“Is there something?” Fei asked.

“I feel like I finally understand Shure,” I said.

“You asked for this, though,” Fei said.

“I know,” I said.

Wryly smiling, I asked the next reports to be brought in.

If I have the time to complain, I might as well do my job.



I looked at the map and thought to myself.

On the map, there was a linchpin pierced on the entrance of the forest. That was the colonial city. North of that was the mountains of the snow god and in the south were the free cities. According to intel, Germion Kingdom and the southern city states are in conflict over their borders.

If Nemush could become the next patriarch, then things might change. I don't want to rely on just him, but if that holy war of his does happen, nothing would be better.

The reason I want the south in conflict is so that I don't have to worry about them allying themselves to Gowen during our battle.

I turned my gaze to the north.

A disease is spreading through the mountains of the snow god. That's probably because of their lack of hygiene if anything. I've never heard of goblins getting sick, but it would be terrible if we ended up passing the disease to humans after occupying a human settlement.

My goal is conquest not annihilation.

Perhaps I should have the goblins make a habit of washing themselves by the river.

Diseases can greatly weaken countries. It's not easy to solve them. It would be nice to have subordinates who could handle such things under me.

There are a lot of beasts. I wonder if Gi Gi could cause chaos in the north by driving them away to the north.

Gi Gi's beast horde should prove to be a powerful ally in any case. Of course, it depends on how cooperative they are, but they should be at least as strong or stronger than a hundred goblins.

There shouldn't be any problems in utilizing the beasts in the north.

I turned my gaze back to the south.

I acted friendly toward Nemush, but I wonder how effective that'll actually be?

Even if I want to wreak havoc on the human territories, it won't do to worsen Nemush' position after striking a bargain with him.

I wonder if they'll really fall into chaos without the goblins making an appearance...

I should probably talk to Gi Gi and Gi Gu.

As I looked down on the map, I moved my pieces against the invisible opponent I was facing.

Like this the Fortress of the Abyss greeted winter.

112 days until the war with the humans.

CHAPTER 152

A CONFRONTATION WITH THE STRONG

I added the necessary information on the stone-made map of the Fortress of the Abyss. That was a map that put together using Shure's map and the information from the goblin scouts.

"To the south are killer ants and scarabs."

According to Gi Gu Verbena of the wolf pack, the big players in the south are the orcs, the killer ants, and the scarabs.

Perhaps I could make use of them in the coming war.

The numerous killer ants with a force comparable to that of the southern goblins. The powerful scarabs who can't fight for a long time.

Neither of them can easily be used. I suppose you could say they're defective to some extent. I'd like to investigate more if possible, but it seems the coming war is going to be a lot bigger than expected.

I looked at the walls drawn on the map.

According to the ancient beast tamer, Gi Gi, who came from the north, there weren't any particularly strong forces there.

The north was apparently mostly a marsh rich with various beasts and vegetation.

To the west are the demihumans and the elves. We are currently allied and our relationship is going smoothly.

As for the humans to the east, they haven't made any move so far. The orc king, Bui, and his men are keeping an eye on the humans as well as acting as a breakwater in case they decide to attack. The kobolds led by Hasu are also situated to the east. They make their living by leeching off the orcs.

On top of that, we also have another base in Gi Go's old village, where I had a beacon built. It is being taken care of by the Ganra tribe and the water mage, Gi Bi, and the beast tamer, Gi Bu.

There had been no news of the south since dispatching the mad lion, Gi Zu Ruo, but that changed after Gi Gu Verbena returned.

Presently, it could be said that the south has calmed down.

Of course, that's a result brought about by Gi Gu's attempt to connect the scattered villages. The way he went about things allows one to quickly expand territory.

We have no rule in lands without goblins.

There are no goblins in the area near the southern desert. It is inhabited solely by the killer ants and the scarabs. There are no known predators in the area either.

I don't know how long this false peace with the humans will last, but I should consider sending a force to the south.

If we can reason with them, we'll talk, but if not, we'll break their legs and make them kneel. Either way they will serve my purpose.

It would be problematic, however, if the killer ants and scarabs end up becoming much bigger than expected. Taking on two such races at the same time is quite risky. We should investigate first, but there's not much time until the war.

As I thought that, I wondered to myself who I should send.

Gi Gu is the ruler of the south. It's his land too, so I would be spitting on his face if I were to send another goblin to investigate.

Gi Gu Verbena would have to be the main goblin in charge, but he can't be alone, as he'll probably end up fighting the killer ants. I don't want to incur anymore losses if possible.

I'll have to send someone equal Gi Gu's standing, someone he can share his opinions with.

“Should I call Gi Do Buruga?”

The two shamans studying at the elven region were Gi Za Zakuend and Gi Do Buruga.

I could call those two and have them negotiate with the killer ants, but... they also had their own duties.

“Hmm... This one’s a little worrying, but...”

I decided to send a different person. The killer ants did live in the desert, so...

As I made up my mind, I called over Fanfan and sent her along with Gi Gu to the south.



Outside the Forest of Darkness, past its western exit, was Shumea and her group in the capital of the Germion Kingdom. Currently, they were gathering information as adventurers.

Felbi knew little of the human world and Selena resented it, so the blind Pale had to teach them how to act.

They wore long robes that hid their elven features as they entered a bar.

“Hmm~ If it isn’t the mellow fragrant of liquor...” Shumea said.

“It’s just cheap liquor...” Pale pointed out.

“I drink when I’m happy, so it doesn’t matter as long as I can get drunk. Besides, if it’s cheap, then I won’t have to worry about the expenses,” she replied, puffing out her abundant chest as she did.

Everyone else except for Shumea was clad in robes, so it wasn’t possible to see their faces, but regardless, the way they walked spoke volumes of their strength. Because of that the experienced among the adventurers didn’t bother them.

Of course, since Shumea was the only one without a robe, she was the one to order.

As various dishes and beer were served, Shumea and the elves ate as they

eavesdropped on the conversations occurring in the other tables.

The sylphs have always had good hearing, so they were able to easily pick out what was being talked about.

When they had gathered enough information, they finally started to focus on the food before them.

“The humans sure know how to cook... You really can’t look down on them,” Felbi said as he struck his fork into the fried chicken.

“Felbi, in the human world, it’s rude to talk with your mouth full,” Pale flatly said, causing Selena to laugh.

“Ahh, alright, I’ll be careful. I think there are a lot of ways to eat good food, though,” Felbi said as he filled his mouth with hot food and then washed it off with a mug of beer before finally exhaling a large ‘puha’.

“It’s vulgar,” Pale said.

“But this way is delicious. Come on, Selena, you try it,” Felbi said.

As if he wasn’t satisfied with ignoring teacher Pale, he even had to influence Selena.

Pale glared at Felbi as Selena happily imitated him.

“...Good grief,” Pale sighed before taking a bite of her food.

She cut a small portion of her food and then gently placed it in her mouth. The way she ate was just like that of a young princess.

“What are you looking at? If you don’t eat, we’ll never finish all these,” Pale said when she noticed Shumea grinning at them.

When Shumea realized she’d stopped eating after being taken by the elves’ amusing interaction, she quickly cut a huge slice of bread, soaked it in soup, and ate it.

“Sure is great being free,” Shumea said.

“What do you mean?” Pale asked, not quite understanding what Shumea meant.

Shumea laughed cheerfully after eating her bread and drinking her soup. “Laughing, eating, talking... You know, normal stuff. Slaves are basically belongings, so they can’t do those things.”

Pale nodded.

As someone who has never been a slave, Pale couldn’t understand the value of Shumea’s ‘freedom’.

Shumea’s words gradually changed her perspective.

At the very least, there were no slaves under the Goblin King.

That was an irrefutable truth.

But wasn’t it simply because of the difference in the size of territory? The humans have been expanding and progressing in the past 400 years. As a result, a great disparity of wealth has been created between the rich and the poor.

If the Goblin King were to rule such a similarly large territory, wouldn’t the same problem befall him?

Perhaps the only reason the Goblin King did not have any slaves was because the territory he ruled was small. Moreover, he only ruled over goblins...

Was the human world you saw really that beautiful? Starvation, poverty, discrimination, innocents being blamed for crimes they did not commit, a stark difference between those with power and those without... Wasn’t that world also ruled by the same law of the jungle that haunts the savage forests?

The words of the king echoed within her mind.

Pale shook her head. He was wrong. Even if she wasn’t particularly troubled in her upbringing, she wasn’t blessed either. At the very least, she believed that.

After all, didn’t she help Elks become a huge clan even while lacking money and people?

If you get your friends to help you, surely it would be possible to make life better. The human world has always worked like that.

The time she spent with them wouldn't possibly lose out to the Goblin King's rule.

"Pale?" Selena asked with concern when she noticed her go silent.

"Huh? Oh, it's nothing. I was just thinking," Pale said.

Seeing Pale eat again, Selena didn't ask anymore and continued eating herself.



It took 5 days to reach the elven village of Forni. On my back was flamberge and in my light armor were some throwing daggers. The disciple of Dumbre Dadee David was following me from behind.

"I-It's around here," he said in a fearful voice.

If you're wondering why I'm here, that's because a letter from David came.

—I would like to make use of your promise.

That was the only thing Fei read, and I immediately left the Fortress of the Abyss to the knight class, Gi Ga Rax, and set off for Forni.

"Are you really going when you're so busy?" Fei asked.

"Time is a finite resource, which is exactly why I must fulfill the promises I have made. That is what you call fidelity," I said.

All living things will eventually die. If I don't fulfill the promises I've made when I can, I might lose the opportunity to do so altogether.

"...Are you sure it's not because the throne is uncomfortable?" Fei asked.

"You jest," I retorted.

Though it's true it's not an easy job.

"I suppose once in a while should be fine," Fei said.

With those parting words, I took flamberge and headed for Forni.

"Wow, you really came," David said in surprise, laughing as he did. "My request is about my disciple."

Beside David was a young timid koro dwarf. He had a beard as well, but it was still thin compared to David's.

"He's skilled, but he's too cowardly. I'd like for you to accompany him," David said.

"My promise was—" I tried to explain, but he interjected.

"To swing your sword once for me, right? I would like you to use that sword of yours to protect my disciple," David said.

Well, I suppose it's fine.

"What is your disciple looking for?" I asked.

"Hey, kid! You tell him!" David implored his disciple.

The timid koro dwarf hit David on the back as he fearfully spoke. "I-I'm going to look for the shiny black stone known as Vasheyn and a wind spirit stone," he said.

Wouldn't you normally use black iron to forge a sword?

When David saw me puzzled at the unfamiliar name he laughed.

"Vasheyn is a fragile ore that normally can't be used, but this kid here wants to try no matter what, so I told him to get it himself," David explained.

He must trust him a great deal. David is plenty stubborn when it comes to smithing, so the fact that he's willing to let him try speaks volumes of his ability... It would be a pity to lose a talent like him.

“Very well. I shall fulfill my promise,” I said.

“Thanks, Goblin King,” David folded his arms and laughed with satisfaction.

We walked for 5 days from Forni toward the north. It’s good to move without an escort from time to time. It lets me hone my dulling senses.

I smiled as a horn fox appeared before me. It wasn’t very big, but it was able to control fire. It’s a kind of monster I’ve never met before.

As it cried a high-pitched voice, a flame was lit at the end of its lone horn. That flame condensed into a bullet, which then shot forth toward me.

It took 4 seconds all-in-all for it to load and shoot.

I lifted the screaming koro dwarf with one hand and jumped out of the way of the bullet.

As I watched the fire bullet shoot past me by my side, I thought of how troublesome it would be to deal with a skulk of horn foxes.

There’s only one right now, so it’s not too troublesome, but a skulk would really give me a run for my money.

I threw David’s disciple into the bushes, then I bolted off with ether in my legs for the horn fox. In the blink of an eye, flames clad flamberge, and blood spurted in the air.

“Hmm...” I muttered as I pondered to myself.

“U-Umm... Goblin King, your majesty?” David’s disciple called out to me.

I wonder if Gi Gi could make use of these guys.

“I found it!” David’s disciple pointed to a rocky mountain beyond the trees.

So that’s where we’re going.

It’s still morning, but the earlier we finish this, the better.

“Let’s go then,” I said.

I took my spoils with me and headed for the rocky mountain with David’s disciple.



I noted a big scar on a tree as I noticed a flayed tree bark.

There was probably a large monster in the area, but we still continued our way.

The area surrounding the rocky mountain was as quiet as could be.

When we approached the base of the rocky mountain, a hole leading underground came to view.

“I-It’s here!” David’s disciple said as he – in a rare moment – showed some foolhardy courage and attempted to run off.

Of course, I grabbed him by the shoulders to stop him.

He looked at me not understanding, but I had already reached for my blade.

It seems doing nothing but paperwork everyday really did take a toll on me.

The thick aura of blood lust coming out from the hole made me inadvertently grip my sword tight.

I can’t believe I failed to notice such a powerful monster despite being this close!

“GURUUuuUuUUuuU...” As I bellowed out a howl, the monster showed himself.

It was a bear two times taller than my own height.

“A fire-speckled big bear! A red bear!” David’s disciple exclaimed in a daze.

“Get away!” I told him.

I could feel the pressure bearing down on me just standing in front of it.

The red fur of the bear shone in the light like a hard stretch of armor, and those claws on its paws looked so sharp they seemed like they could easily break my neck given the opportunity.

I looked down on monsters because I always believed I couldn't lose to them, but it seems I might've been too arrogant.

That tree awhile ago was probably meant to show that this was its territory.

The reason it's so quiet around here is also because of this monster.

"GAaRUAAAAaA!"

Standing on its hind-legs, the red bear let out a powerful howl, one strong enough to make me quiver.

In fact, even the very air shook as its howl resounded throughout the whole forest.

That howl woke me up.

I checked to see if my legs were still firmly planted on the ground.

I haven't gotten weaker physically, but it seems the hate within has grown weaker.

I must challenge this powerful enemy.

That is all that matters now.

Right now, not even my throne can make me turn around.

Heat literally left through my lips as it turned into a white cloud that flowed behind me.

In this moment, just like when I fought the orcs, just like when I fought the giant spider, just like when I fought the gray wolf, my instincts as a warrior awoke.

"GURUuUUuuUaAAa!!"

I bellowed out my own howl in response to the red bear's pressure, invoking Defiant

Soul and World-Devouring Howl in the same breath.

—Mental pressure has been alleviated (HIGH)

—Defensive strength and offensive strength are increased when fighting a monster of a higher class.

Using Defiant Soul, I turned myself from a king to a mere warrior. In my hands, ether flowed into flamberge.

“Turn me into a blade!! (Enchant)”

The black flames I stole from Verid wrapped themselves around flamberge.

David forged it from alloy, so the flames were able to penetrate it smoothly, and the resulting sharpness was like the raging flames themselves.

“GARUuAAa!”

The red bear lifted up its burly arms and swung them.

I slashed with flamberge in response.

That might’ve been a foolish decision. After all, if I could, it would’ve been better to dodge.

A wave of paralysis rushed through my arms as my blade met with the red bear’s claws.

—Those claws are too dangerous!

Flamberge failed to penetrate it despite being enchanted. What power!

I rooted myself to the ground as hard as I could as I sought to endure the red bear’s strength.

I even invoked the Soul of the Berserk King to increase my strength at the cost of my sanity.

—Rejoice, my soul! Before us is a battle! A battle that is pure combat! There is no need to think. Not the future, not the past, not anything! Right now, in this moment, all that matters is this duel between two monsters!

“GURUUuUuAAAaGAAA!”

—The numbness of my arms left, and a power greater than I’ve ever felt bore into my sword and the land on which I stood.

—K-Kil, kill, kill the enemy!

My sword clashed with the red bear’s claws once more.

“GAaAA!”

I lost out in power, but I neither felt fearful nor saddened. Instead, joy filled my cheeks as a smile appeared on my lips.

Was that because I was going insane, or was that simply because I could finally fight a worthy foe? I don’t know, but either way, joy filled me!

“GURUuUuuAAA!”

I invoked Defiant Soul again to bring reason back to my sword, then I used Sword Mastery A- to bring it up a notch.

As my sword clashed with the red bear’s claws, we simultaneously bellowed out a howl.

“GAaaAAA!”

“GURUuUAAA!”

The red bear’s claws birthed great winds as it swung through the air, but my flamberge managed to repel them with a change in angle.

One hit, two hits, three, four...

The clash of raw power turned my thoughts into a lake of fire, the red bear the same.

The only thing on our minds was to destroy each other.

Due to the twin-headed snake's blessing, I was able to easily control my ether, allowing me to easily instantly concentrate it into various parts of my body at will.

"GAaAA AaA A!"

We were at a standstill, neither edging out over the other.

That seemed to enrage the red bear, as it bellowed out a howl louder than before and swung its claws.

—It got stronger!?

We have been equal for a while now, but suddenly, though only a little, the red bear was winning.

"Nu!?"

In this battle where one step wrong meant death, the sudden change in the enemy's strength caused my sword to lag for a moment.

This is bad, I thought. And as soon as I did, the red bear swung its claws and sent me flying. It left a wound extending from my chest to my stomach that caused blood to spurt.

I dropped flamberge as I tumbled on the ground.

Just as I was planning on using ether to treat my wounds, the red bear bellowed out another howl. When I turned to it, it was about to ram me.

Helpless, I was sent flying once more.

As I crashed into a tree, my eyes grew hazy and blood puked out of my mouth.

Immediately after I took a throwing knife from my armor and threw it at the red bear.

"GAaAAA!?"

Though it only barely grazed it, it still managed to slow the red bear a little.

Using that opening, I took flamberge back.

My sides creaked.

I've taken plenty of damage, but there was no stopping now.

Using flamberge as a cane, I forced myself up.

—Don't show weakness! If you show even a hint of it, everything will end!

I rebuked myself as I moved ether into my legs.

“My life is like a cloud of dust! (Accel)”

“GURUuuUUu...”

The red bear watched me closely as it stood back up again.

A contest of power began once more.

But try as I might, I still ended up losing out to the red bear.

I didn't have time to stop my wounds from bleeding, so I had to gather my ether into various parts of my body, such as my legs, my back, my arms... If not for that, I would have lost a long time ago. My ether wouldn't have held up if I just tried to heal myself normally.

Blood flowed from my chest down, but I never stopped swinging flamberge.

“GAAaAa!”

“GURUuUaAA aA A!”

Gradually, my control over my ether started to let up, and I started making mistakes.

The flow of ether that ran from my ankle to my hips broke. When I realized that, I jumped away from the red bear.

I immediately focused ether into my legs, but it broke off again.

I recalled that moment when I first messed up using ether directly on my own body, but instead of seeing an image of the worst case scenario flashing through my mind, I saw myself separated from my own body, looking down on it.

“GURUuuUu...”

—Why?

The red bear didn’t follow, and instead watched me.

What is it doing? Is it being cautious?

—What did I do just now?

I ignored the red bear for a moment and traced back to what I did.

I focused my ether onto my hips from my legs.... I moved the ether like water flowing...

—I moved it like water... is that it?

Until now, I’ve been gathering ether into whichever body part needed it. I would push ether into my legs, then into my hips to swing my sword, then my back, and then lastly, my arms.

But what if I moved ether like it was flowing, moving like water from one area to another?

“GARUaAAAaaAA!”

The red bear bellowed out a howl.

Let’s try it!

I didn’t have any other choice anyhow.

I jumped into the fray once more as I sought to control my ether again.

I caused ether to flow from my legs to my hips, then to my back, and then my arms. For the first time, I was consciously controlling it instead of relying on instinct.

Ether flowed like water as I swung flamberge, and suddenly, the battle I had been losing all this time, turned to my favor.

“GAaAa!?”

The red bear was shocked, but so was I.

Sparks flashed as flamberge clashed with the red bear’s claws.

Gradually, the red bear started to fight defensively.

Though shocked, I calmly accepted the situation and sought to finish the duel.

“GAaAA AaA A!”

—Of course, if I force him back, it’s only a given, he’ll come back fiercer!

But I slid through the flurry of swipes, to align my sword to take the kill.

“Turn me into a blade! (Enchant)”

At the same time, I invoked the King’s Dance at the Edge of Death and controlled ether in a flowing fashion, moving it from my legs to my hips, then to my back, my arms, and into flamberge! Then I invoked the Third Chant and unleashed my blade!

In the next instant, a fatal strike descended on the red bear, tearing it apart as flamberge tore through its armor-like fur from neck to chest.

The black flames raged as flamberge penetrated the red bear, leaving a scorching mark on the rocky mountain itself.

Looking down on the fallen red bear, I exhaled and began to heal myself.

—89 days until the war with the humans.



Level has risen.

72 => 92

‘Magic Manipulation’ has changed to ‘Flowing Magic Control’

CHAPTER 153

KILLER ANT

Tl Note: Sorry, misread. Vasheyn isn't a wind stone, rather, the disciple is looking for a vasheyn and a wind stone. Also this is a super short part, as I came home late. I'll post the rest tomorrow.

After defeating the red bear and retrieving the ore, we went back to David. Dragging back the red bear's corpse all the way made the trip a difficult one.

"Well, I never. Who would've thought you'd be able to defeat that thing," David said.

I furrowed my brows.

"Did you know that monster was there?" I asked.

If he knew, then he had basically sent me and his disciple to die. But why? I promised to swing my sword for him, so if he wanted me to defeat that thing, he could've just said so from the start.

There was no reason to ask me to escort his disciple.

"Well, I thought there might be a monster, so I asked you to escort him. At least with you around, I figured he'd come back alive," David said.

So everything went just as he'd hoped for.

I suppose asking me to guard his disciple was more likely for me to accept than asking me to go kill some monster he wasn't didn't really know that well.

"From the looks of things, it seems you've run into some problems indeed, but because of that my disciple's also grown," David said.

David's disciple went to his workshop as soon as we came back, only giving a passing greeting to David.

“His eyes have changed. Thank you,” David said.

“There’s no need,” I said.

It was a promise after all.

I didn’t bother pursuing the issue of his request either.

Seven days later, a messenger came to me with a letter and a great sword.

On that sword’s hilt was engraved the name: zweihander, the black-flame speckled great sword.

The sword was black and forged for strength. Its straight shape embodied its unbending will.

Only one sentence was written along with the sword. It read: Please use this when you lose your weapon.

I did lose my weapon during the battle with the red bear, didn’t I?

“Kurt Bild Dash... That’s the name of David’s disciple.”

My heart became lighter at the thought of a new budding talent.



Gi Gu Verbena is fighting a hard battle!

When I got that report, I couldn’t help but doubt my ears for a moment. The chief of the tarpidae, Fanfan, accompanied Gi Gu to visit the killer ants in an attempt to pull them in as allies, but instead of gifts, what visited us next was a report of a difficult war.

Did something unexpected happen? Perhaps there were more of them than expected?

Unfortunately, as much as I wanted more information, the killer ants were too far from the fortress.

...In any case, this is a good opportunity.

As I thought that, I had the Paradua messenger give my orders.

“A war has begun in the south! Have Gi Gi Orudo gather his beasts! Then tell Gi Jii Yubu that the time to use his soldiers has come!”

But that wasn't all...

“Gi Ji Arsil shall lead the goblins under his banner to make way for the main force! And Gi Ga Rax! Have him gather his forces as well!”

It is best to have a rehearsal before the real thing, after all. What better opportunity is there to test our mettle in than in live combat? Moreover, the goblins gathered under me are too different and have never had the chance of working together.

Since the killer ants are numerous, I will have them help us in this combat exercise.

I gathered the four nobles and a knight goblin before me.

“Gi Ba, Gi Ii, Gi Uu, you will be following Gi Jii Yubu!”

The fierce arm, Gi Ba, the explorer, Gi Ii, the water mage, Gi Uu. They were all of the rare class but they were all different from each other.

These are the goblins Gi Jii trained. I'm looking forward to seeing how they've grown.

The goblins under him trained with three-man cells, then they moved on to kentors, and then regiols.

Rares usually led the kentors, while the nobles led the regiols. The goblins have been training under such a system for a while now, but we've never had the opportunity to test it. At long last, that opportunity has come.

I had Gi Ji Arsil lead his intelligence division to work as a scout and make a path for the main force. The main force should travel a path as safe as possible.

“Shall we call the Gaidga and the Paradua as well?” Gi Ji Asked.

“Tell them to send what they can in the next two days!” I said.

“As you command!” Gi Ji replied.

After sending Gi Ji on his way, I called to those left behind.

“Fei, can I leave the fortress to you?” I asked.

“For some reason, it feels like I’ve always been getting the short end of the stick since leaving Forni,” Fei complained.

“Don’t grumble.” I wryly smiled and lightly hit him on the shoulders.

“Yes, yes, I understand. Go! Leave me be! Go have your fun,” Fei said.

I turned to Yellow. “As for the rest, Yellow, you handle it along with the old goblin.”

“As you will, Your Majesty,” he said.

We can make our move now precisely because the east, west, and north haven’t made their move.

Once the war with the humans begins, we will have to put all of our efforts there.

But in order to have that war, first, we must secure our territory and its surrounding territories.

I need to think about the demihumans too, but for now, I’ll have to prioritize the goblins.

It’s too difficult to tackle two issues at the same time, especially when you’re fighting a battle you can’t lose. It’s a pity I’m not that talented at war.

Even if I can lead my subordinates, being at the front makes it difficult to actually order them.

I’ll just have to train them well.

We spent a day preparing at the Fortress of the Abyss, then we made our way south.

The goblin horde numbered 400 goblins strong.



Thanks to Gi Ji Arsil and his goblins leading the way, we arrived at the Gaidga village to the south after a day. We took in the Paradua and Gaidga forces, and then headed further down south.

When we arrived at the southern region, Gi Ji came back after scouting to inform us that Gi Gu was fighting even further south. It seems he was fighting at the very borders of the forest and the desert, where the anthill of the killer ants were.

I thought they were being pushed back in the battle, but it seems, that wasn't the case.

"They're in their territory?" I asked.

"I know it's hard to understand, but..."

Gi Ji's report was a bit vague, but if the killer ants really had a way to fight enemies while dragging them into their own turf, I will really have to find a way to negotiate with them. That's exactly why I sent Gi Gu and Fanfan though.

Clearly, talks have failed.

It would be best to keep this war short. We'll ensure there's enough food first, then we'll quickly decide to battle. If the war goes for too long, it might negatively influence our coming war with the humans.

After ordering my subordinates to gather food and for Gi Gi to position his beasts at the furthest area of our formation, I went to rest.

The reason I had the beasts placed furthest away from us was to ensure that we wouldn't be attacked while we were asleep. They had noses superior even to ours, so they would surely be able to tell when an enemy is coming.

As the goblins gathered food and Gi Ji Arsil gathered intelligence, I gradually understood the current state of the war.

There was indeed an anthill at the borders of the forest and the desert, but it was at least a day's distance into the desert. Honestly, it's a bit hard to say that's still close to the forest when by that time you can't see anything but sand.

Gi Gu's southern goblins specialized in forest warfare. They managed to defeat the killer ants before because they fought in the forest, but when they tried to destroy the anthill this time around, they had to walk under the sweltering heat of the desert sun, only to be met by a surprise attack from the killer ants. It seems that was the reason behind their difficulties.

I made full use of Gi Ji's gathered intel to pinpoint the enemy's location and ascertain our distance.

"Gi Jii Yubu shall lead the vanguard," I said.

"As my lord commands," Gi Jii Yubu said, kneeling.

The reason I had him lead the vanguard was because this battle was essentially to help Gi Gu. Gi Gi and his horde of beasts or Gaidga and their overly ferocious goblins would surely have a hard time cooperating with Gi Gu and his southern goblins.

As for Gi Ga Rax and his horde of 'injured goblins' and Paradua with their beast riders, their power probably wouldn't be able to match the killer ants' brute strength of sheer numbers.

Of course, the 'injured goblins' and the Paradua have their own specialties such as tenacity and flexibility, but either way, I'm not comfortable having them take the main stage this time.

Because of that I decided to put Gi Jii's new soldiers to use.

"Riders of Paradua, you shall ride along Gi Jii's flanks," I said.

"We raise our spears for the king!" The young chieftain, Hal, said as he raised his spear toward the heavens.

"Gi Gi, Rashka, and Gi Ga, you are to be on standby. Wait for my orders," I said.

Rashka wasn't all that happy with waiting, but he complied nevertheless.

"Don't make that face," I said to Rashka. "Your role is an important one. It's essentially, the cleanup crew. You can expect much."

"If you say so," Rashka said, nodding with his arms folded.

Now then, I think it's about time we drew the curtains.



Gi Gu clicked his tongue and rolled his eyes as he watched colonies of killer ants come out from everywhere in the desert.

"Lord Fanfan, are you not done yet!?" Gi Gu demanded.

"Lord Gi Gu, don't you know one shouldn't hurry a lady? Fanfan is already rushing as she is," Fanfan said.

They've been on the receiving end of one surprise attack after another, and apparently, the reason for that was the underground tunnels of the killer ants.

From a glance, the place looked no different from any other place aside from the crag-like opening, but killer ants suddenly came crawling out of the sand.

With a battlefield like that, it was only natural that Gi Gu would have a hard time.

Presently, Fanfan was looking for when the ants would come out of these hidden tunnels.

Gi Gu wanted to avoid dealing with the endless swarms of killer ants unprepared, so he had to rely on Fanfan to figure when and where they would be coming from.

Being able to figure out the movements in the earth was one the greatest skill of the tarpidae, which was known as the 'hardest claw'.

"They're coming. Five ants from the right and back. They're 20 steps away to the right and 10 steps away from the back."

10 seconds later, just as she predicted, killer ants came out of the ground, but unfortunately for them, axes and spears were waiting to greet them.

Unfortunately, Fanfan was only one person. Because of that Gi Gu and his goblins have been progressing very slowly.

It was still much better than fighting blind though.

“This is bad, a huge swarm is approaching,” Fanfan said.

As soon as Gi Gu heard that, he clicked his tongue and called out to his men.

“Brace yourselves! They’re going to come from all directions!” Gi Gu said.

The three sibling goblins Gi Gu trained raised their voices hastily.

“Brace yourselves! Brace yourselves!” Gu Long said.

“They’re coming from below! From below!” Gu Big said.

“Draw your weapons!” Gu Tough said.

“50 killer ants from the back and the left,” Fanfan said.

Gi Gu clicked his tongue. “Have we been lured!?”

The duke class, Gi Gu Verbena, calculated in his mind.

At this rate, the warriors the king had given him will all be crushed.

The fatigue they’ve been incurring since leaving the forest was by no means small.

With nothing to block the sunlight, the day itself sapped them of their strength and the scorching heat of the sand made it feel like they were walking on hot coals. Even finding something to drink wasn’t easy around these parts.

At this rate, they would surely be annihilated.

The southern desert was rich, but they didn’t have an endless supply of warriors. It

took time to train a warrior.

But the king gave him a command. The ants were to either obey or be wiped out.

He wasn't sure how he would report to the king that he wasn't able to accomplish either, but with no other choice left, he resolved himself and drew his long sword.

"Since they've gone through all the effort of going out, we'll send their heads as a present to his highness!" Gi Gu stomped on the ground and encouraged his subordinates.

"Oh, there's another 400 coming from behind," Fanfan suddenly added.

"What!?" Gi Gu spat. "400... Burn it all!"

If it was impossible to win, he would have no choice but to retreat.

Unfortunately, 400 ants were blocking his path of retreat.

"Go! We'll break through the back!" Gi Gu commanded.

At the very least, he would lead his horde and cut open a path of retreat.

"Ah, but..." Fanfan feigned trying to argue.

She didn't lie. After all, there were indeed 400.

As the clouds of sand cleared up, a great horde suddenly came to view, but there was something off. For one, killer ants didn't need to clear the clouds of sand.

The goblins squinted their eyes in an attempt to see despite the blinding light of the sun. Gradually, the figures of that great horde came to view.

"That's!" Gi Gu exclaimed.

"Reinforcements," Fanfan coolly said as if she'd known all along.

Gi Gu turned to Fanfan with reproachful eyes.

“You should’ve said so from the start!” He rebuked.

“Hey, all I said was the number. Never said they were enemies. Besides, Fanfan isn’t very good at things walking on the ground,” she said.

“Arghhh!” Gi Gu clicked his tongue for the umpteenth time, then he turned to the one leading their reinforcements.

It was a goblin donned in an armor and wielded a spear. It was most likely Gi Jii.

“Gi Jii Yubu and his soldiers have come! Stand and fight goblins! We can’t lose face here!” Gi Gu said with a howl as he led the southern goblins to fight the swarm of killer ants.

Having been caught in the middle of a pincer attack, the killer ants from behind were extinguished in the blink of an eye.

Gi Jii and Gi Gu were glad to see each other safe.

“Your safety above all else, Lord Gi Gu,” Gi Jii said.

“Sorry, and thank you. Still... you sure took your sweet time coming,” Gi Gu said.

It wasn’t only Gi Jii’s army that came, the Paradua had also come. They stood out from the goblins because of their rider beasts, so any goblin could instantly tell whether one was from Paradua or not.

“His liege has commanded that we extinguish the killer ants of the south,” Gi Jii said.

“What!?” Gi Gu exclaimed.

“Lord Gi Ji Arsil reported of the difficulties of your battle, and so in his highness’ fear of losing one of his most valued men, he gave that command,” Gi Jii explained.

“How shameful... I must thank the king. Can you lead me to him,” Gi Gu asked.

Gi Jii nodded. “The king has willed that you retreat for the time being. Will that be acceptable?”

“With the way things are, it can’t be helped,” Gi GU said.

Though the goblins trampled over their enemies, the desert still took a lot out of them. It was best to let the southern goblins rest first, then join the fray when they were back to health. Hence, Gi Gu voiced no complaints to the king’s will.

“Fanfan will go too,” Fanfan said.

“It’s my fault, it’s fine if I go alone,” Gi Gu said to Fanfan, who had apparently gotten behind him without noticing.

“I’m sick of the heat,” Fanfan complained. “I want to rest in the cool forest.”

“...Do what you want,” Gi Gu said, not bothering to stop Fanfan, who neither bothered to hide her true intentions.

After that the goblins called the tarpidae for reinforcements and the battle greatly swung to their favor.

The goblin king used ‘baits’ to lure out the enemy and quickly crushed them with the goblins’ overwhelming number.



Thanks to Fanfan’s people we were able to make our way to the killer ants’ anthill. From a distance, it looked no more than any other rock, but it was actually a giant hole. It was what you would call a dungeon.

The passage was narrow, so it would not be possible to sent a large army through. Because of that we decided to send only the strong.

Rashka, of course had to go, being the most eager of the goblins. Gi Gu Verbena would also be going, as he wanted to clear his name of his recently incurred shame. Gi Ji Arsil would be going to serve as scout. Gi Ga Rax, as well, as he insisted that he had to be the one to guard me. And lastly, Fanfan and me, the former which I forcefully dragged. Altogether, there were about 50 of us who entered the anthill.

I left Gi Jii Yubu and Hal to stand watch outside. With the tarpidae working alongside them, they could continuously bait the enemy and scatter their forces.

The interiors of the anthill was a lot bigger than expected. It was also plenty bright.

The passage was made big probably to make it easy to transport their captured prey. Light would also shoot inside from above, keeping the place well lit.

Killer ants naturally attacked us along the way, but Rashka made short work of them.

I hope he doesn't become too eager and end up destroying the anthill, though...

As we descended down the anthill, their numbers grew, some of which were warriors of their own kind. Army ants, which possessed powerful shells and jaws. Still, they were mercilessly beaten by Rashka.

Gi Gu Verbena and the elite of his southern goblins formed three-man cells as they fought alongside Rashka.

After descending 10 levels, we finally succeeded in capturing the ant queen.

Rashka was about to crush her, but Fanfan stopped him.

The queen's guards were killed and she herself was being pinned down, but Fanfan talked to her.

As far as I was concerned, her groans were nothing more than 'groans' indeed, but apparently, Fanfan could understand those groans.

Fanfan started making strange cries to converse with the queen. After a while, she called me over.

"Your Majesty, the ants are willing to obey as long you give them food. Also, they will obey even more if you treat Fanfan better," Fanfan said.

That last part was obviously a lie, but she deserved to be rewarded, so I let it pass. Especially, since I didn't really want to destroy them but have their cooperation instead.

"I see... So, Fanfan, who wants to be treated better, what is that you want?" I asked.

“Eh, seriously? Wow, Your Majesty, you’re so kind! Then please get Yushika’s bag—” she said.

“Rejected,” I curtly said.

“Not fair! Didn’t you say you’d treat me better? Fanfan thinks it’s no good to lie,” Fanfan said.

But that doesn’t have anything to do with bettering your treatment, that’s just poking fun at people.

“Well, fine. If that’s no good, then Fanfan would like for the elves to prioritize sending paper to her,” Fanfan said.

“Oh? That’s fine with me, but what are you using them for?” I asked.

“I’ve been writing a book lately. Fanfan is good at both literature and drawing,” she said.

“Very well then. I shall talk to Fei about it,” I said.

“Yay! Thank you, Your Majesty!” She said.

After that Fanfan talked with the queen for a long time. I left the queen to her, and went back up to prepare.

The leadership of the noble classes and above is still lacking.

The enemy this time was weak, so were able to deal with them without issue, but this won’t do... I’ll have to talk to Gi Jii and the others about this.

—57 days until the war with the humans.



Rashka’s level has risen.

76 => 81

Gi Gu Verbena’s level has risen.

1 => 20

CHAPTER 154

SCARABS

“You wish to be acquainted with humans?”

In a corner of the great elven village, Gastair, where the branches up above had intentionally been cleared out to let the light of the sun pass, were two goblins talking over a table made of wood. It was the kind of place that the Goblin King would refer to as a park.

Studying goblins and demihumans from various villages could frequently be seen here.

Of the goblins that were evidently greatly influential were two goblins of the shaman class. Their ability to control the winds and their appearance that set them apart from other goblins have already been accepted by the elves.

“Yes, teacher. I have been studying history lately, but the more I read, the more incomprehensible humans become. They are strong yet sly, powerful yet fragile... Exactly which of these aspects is their true nature?” Gi Do asked.

The king’s most faithful goblin, Gi Za Zakuend, closed one eye and took a deep breath. “Is that book something you borrowed from that elven princess too? You shouldn’t get involved with her too much. It’ll only hurt more later.”

“I don’t think I follow.” Gi Do Buruga said; he was another shaman goblin as well as a student of Gi Za Zakuend.

“Both aspects are true. You recall the king’s treasure, yes?” Gi Za said, moving on with the main subject.

What the goblins referred to as the king’s treasure was the human maiden the king had with him back when they yet knew of the human threat. Her name was Reshia Fel Zeal, a woman and a saint blessed with the power to heal wounds.

“That inexhaustible source of life, the power to recover one’s wounds instantly. With

that by our side, it was like we could be brought back even from the dead. But despite possessing such great power, even a normal goblin could kill her. You could say that humans are imbalanced creatures,” Gi Za said.

As Gi Do nodded, an elf called out to them.

“Mind if I join?” The voice said.

When the goblins turned, what greeted them was a cute elven girl. She had inherited the looks of her parents and was blessed with a noble face. She also had an unyielding spirit which showed through her slightly lifted gaze. She had light clothes on as if she were about to go outside, but what she had on hand was not a weapon but a thick book.

“Lord Shunaria!” Gi Do happily welcomed her.

Contrast to Gi Do’s glee, however, Gi Za had a look on his face as if someone unwanted had come.

“It’s fine. We were just wrapping up. Gi Do, don’t cause trouble for the young princess,” Gi Za said.

“Yes, teacher,” Gi Do said.

Gi Za turned heel and went back to his lab, leaving the couple to happily chat among themselves.

Gi Za was researching about the blood of demihumans.

He knew that there was a power hidden within their blood from the demihuman war and the old documents of the elves, but he did not know how and what kind of power it exhibited.

The young centaur hero, Gurfia, ate the flesh of his brethren and turned himself into a fire demon. The elves used to have a way to concoct stimulants from demihuman blood, but unfortunately, it was lost to the ravages of time.

It goes without saying that for a goblin who has only learned how to read half a year ago, gathering all the data in the library to research even a single topic was nigh

impossible.

As a result, Gi Za turned to experiments. Under the pretense that he needed blood to examine them, he was able to regularly procure some demihuman blood from the once enslaved demihumans.

In exchange, he would hunt monsters for them or give them the flowers Kuzan arranged. The demihumans and the elves thought him odd, but that didn't stop him from continuing his research.

This day was no different. Gi Za cooped himself in his lab and analyzed the demihuman blood. He did not stop even when someone knocked on the door.

"Just go in. I'm busy right now," Gi Za said.

"Ho ho, excuse me for intruding," Gi Za's unexpected visitor said.

As it turns out, it was none other than the old elf, Falun. He was the director of the elven school and though already retired from chief work, he was a person of great influence. He observed Gi Za's research with rapt attention.

"I'm busy right now. What do you need?" Gi Za asked.

"I just wanted to know how your research has been progressing," Falun said with a smile.

Gi Za wryly smiled. "It hasn't. Leave."

"Hmm... As I thought. Still, I can't help but be curious, goblin. What is that has you so intrigued about the demihuman blood? What is it that you seek?" Falun asked.

"Power, of course." Gi Za replied.

Falun stroke his white beard, puzzled. "Aren't you goblins strong enough? You have already conquered the eastern forest, no?"

Silence filled the room for a moment, then Gi Za spoke.

"Do you know what our king seeks?" He asked.

“To defeat humanity?” Falun asked, though only to confirm what he believed could only be the correct answer.

“No, that’s not it. Our king seeks to stretch out his hand and fill it with every corner of the world. In other words, world domination,” Gi Za said.

Impossible, Falun thought, but when he noted the glint in Gi Za’s eyes, he swallowed his breath.

“I will stand beside the king. If he is to conquer the world, then I will be the sword that stands by his side!” Gi Za declared with such power that he ended up breaking the glass cup in his hand.

“—I want power! I want more power!” Gi Za said.

His voice was filled with such passion it seemed to burn a hue like that of rage. Falun had always taken him to be a calm one, but who would’ve thought that he actually hid such fervor within?

“So, that is why you’ve turned to demihuman blood?” Falun said.

“Yes. That demihuman they referred to as a man-eating tiger. Even if it’s only for a moment, if we could gain a power like that, we would surely be able to bolster our forces. That’s why—” Gi Za said.

“Is the world something you can get with power alone, Gi Za Zakuend?” Falun asked.

“What?” Gi Za asked.

“Do you really believe you will be able to reach the ends of the world with power alone?” Falun asked.

Gi Za fell silent at Falun’s question, while Falun’s eyes became nostalgic for some reason.

“What is needed then? What else is needed to defeat one’s foes?” Gi Za asked.

“If the enemies are strong, weaken them. If they are unified, divide them. If the

enemies try to walk, trip them. That is what we refer to as strategy,” Falun said.

“Strategy...” Gi Za muttered.

“People can’t gel along forever. Use that,” Falun advised, then he handed a book to Gi Za.

“I spent my whole life writing it. It is a book on strategies. At least, give it a glance.”

After that Falun left Gi Za to himself.

“I will stand beside the king, huh,” Falun said to himself, seemingly in reminiscence of something



After the killer ants, we proceeded to attack the scarabs. They were much more tenacious than the goblins, but they were few in number and were nocturnal. They were no threat to the goblins.

Unfortunately, much friction has come between our races, as their kind would sometimes attack the goblins who went out to hunt. Since we have already mobilized our troops to deal with the killer ants, I figured we might as well deal with them.

“How far are the scarabs from here?” I asked.

After occupying the anthill, we began gathering information through the ant queen and Gi Gu. As it turns out, their home was a three days’ walk from the anthill. I ordered Gi Gu to scout ahead, while I led the goblins.

“We should sen a messenger first. If they are willing to cooperate, we can talk, if not, then we’ll turn to force,” I said.

I asked for a volunteer to act as messenger, and the young chief of Paradua, Hal, and Gi Gu Verbena of the wolf pack stepped out.

“A messenger’s duty is perilous. I do not mean to imply you are slow, Lord Gi Gu, but I believe that someone who specializes in mobility such as our tribe of Paradua would be better suited to this job. Please pick me, Your Majesty,” Hal said.

“No, it was I who was dispatched first, I should go. This time for sure I will carry out my mission without fail. Please let me wipe away the shame I’ve incurred, Your Majesty!” Gi Gu said.

There was reason behind their words, and either one would actually work, but then I remembered that this area was under Gi Gu’s territory.

“Hal, I know and praise your faithfulness, but you’ll have to take a step back on this one. Gi Gu, I leave it to you,” I said.

“As you command, Your Majesty!” Gi Gu said.

Gi Gu certainly suffered in the hands of the killer ants, but he did not actually fail his mission. He had undertaken an investigation and negotiation job, so I have to give him an even bigger one to show that my trust in him has not faltered.

It would be troubling if he started to doubt himself after one mistake.

There’s a limit to how much I can do by myself. I will need excellent goblins who can manage others if I am to build my kingdom.

Everything is for the sake of defeating the humans.



In the deep of the night, where even the cries of the insects were silenced, where the night god covered the land and the goddess of darkness spread her wings, concealing the light of the twin goddess moons, Gi Gu negotiated with the chief of the scarabs.

He took with him the three Gu brothers. It was an odd feeling for one such as he who was accustomed to leading a great horde, but that in and of itself was a testament to how much importance he placed on this mission.

The chief of the scarabs had – as his name implied – a red carapace that could easily be mistaken for full-body armor. On the back of his carapace were transparent feathers and on his head was a lone horn. There was a pair of antennas that dangled down from his mouth, which he used to search for prey. His limbs were slender, but only because they were compressed inside his carapace, they were by no means weak.

On his hand, he wielded a white spear made out of the bone of some sort of beast.

Gi Gu could not read the scarab chief's emotions from his compound eyes.

The scarab chief spoke as his antennae dangled about. "The revered... chief of the bugmen... Kunshi!"

His voice was not by any means easy to understand.

"Thank you for taking the time to meet me," Gi Gu said emotionlessly.

"Bugmen... have no time... State your... business," Kunshi said.

"Very well then, I shall get straight to the point. If you are willing to cooperate with our king, we can talk, if not..."

Gi Gu reached for his sword. If this bugman was not willing to comply, he would cut him down this very instant.

Kunshi's antennae started swaying quickly as if in a panic.

"Kunshi... Likes peace... No fight..." Kunshi said.

"Then you would prefer peace?" Gi Gu asked.

When he saw Kunshi nod, Gi Gu nodded in satisfaction and set a date to meet.

After that Kunshi visited the king at the appointed time and formed an alliance with the king. Unfortunately, the scarabs weren't exactly unified, so Gi Gu was left with the misfortune of having to figure out what to do with them.

—47 days until the war with the humans.

INTERMISSION

THOUSAND LI TO THE NORTH, EMBRACE THE DAWN I

Status	
Name	Gi Go Amatsuki
Race	Goblin
Level	2
Class	Duke; Wandering Swordsman
Possessed Skills	Sword Mastery A-; Purple Flash; Forsake; Sense; A Master Swordsman's Proof; Silent Nature; Veteran
Divine Protection	Sword God
Attributes	None
Abnormal Status	Sworn to Spare; Sword God's Control

The yugushiva's dance-like attack left Gi Go on the defensive. He wanted to attack, but the snow was just too great of an enemy. The snow reached up his knees, and every time he tried to step in, the snow would sap as much force as he pushed in, dulling his movements.

It was difficult to attack.

"Mr. Gi Go!"

As far as Yoshu was concerned, nothing had changed. Even if there was snow and even if the enemy fought remarkably well like dancing, all he had to do was to put out his shield as usual.

"Don't... interfere!" Gi Go said.

Despite being pushed back, Gi Go did not look anxious, if anything, he looked happy. The yugushiva jumped from the snow as the wind fluttered its white overcoat, stirring up the snow before rushing for Gi Go.

The yugushiva was like a carnivorous bird fluttering in the vast sky as it looked for an opening and bolted for it.

The yugushiva's curved sword that was as big as it cut through the clouds of snow as it struck out toward Gi Go.

In response, Gi Go swept away the snow by his feet.

Gi Go could not match the enemy in speed, so he decided to wait for the enemy and exchange blows.

The light of the fire god's body reflected off his curved sword.

"Come!" Gi Go said.

Gi Go lowered his hips and positioned his sword horizontally as he took on a stance that hid his curved sword from the enemy.

A powerful aura emanated from Gi Go. It was so powerful that Yoshu couldn't help but gulp as he watched.

If this were a normal monster fighting him, it would surely run from his terrifying aura.

But the yugushiva Gi Go was facing did not falter in the slightest. In fact, the yugushiva gave a battle cry as it ran even faster.

"RUuoAAaaI!!"

When the yugushiva was about 10 steps away, it swung his curved sword again, concealing both its and Gi Go's figures.

"Tch!?" Yoshu snapped his tongue.

He knew that the snow was the enemy's ally, so he quickly looked for Gi Go to run where he was.

Yoshu was reminded again of how foolish it was to fight this demon here. The snow

was their home ground, and it was precisely because they were unparalleled on it that they came to be known as yugushiva, which literally meant snow demon.

“Naive. Too naive,” Yoshu spat as he cursed his own naivety.

Before Yoshu could find Gi Go, however, the yugushiva jumped out of the snow, then sounds of swords clashing filled the area.

Not long after, the yugushiva jumped back again, and Gi Go’s figure appeared shortly after he brushed away the snow.

Fortunately, he was still safe. Yoshu heaved a sigh of relief.

“Mr. Gi Go! Let’s withdraw! The odds are far too against us!”

They should run while they still could.

“Retreat? Yoshu, the very purpose of this trip is right before our eyes! How could I run!?”

Gi Go wanted to find a worthy adversary and suppress the sword god within, then he would stand before the king once more.

“But!” Yoshu wanted to say that the enemy was too strong, but Gi Go only shook his head, his gaze never leaving the enemy before him.

When Gi Go clashed with this enemy awhile ago, the enemy swung its sword three times. When Gi Go thought back on how he planned to exchange blows, he couldn’t help but deride himself. The enemy’s sword was far faster and far sharper than he could have ever imagined.

Because of that Gi Go could only defend against two of the three strikes, while the third managed to graze his arm, leaving behind a trail of blood.

“Speak no further! I have all that I’ve asked for! A strong enemy, a worthy foe!”

Gi Go did not spare a glance on the blood drizzling down his arm. He only grit his teeth as he exhaled a faint breath, focusing his mind on the sword god sleeping within.

Yoshu was at a loss.

The pressure Gi Go was emanating seemed even greater than before, but that might've only been his imagination. He wasn't sure.

Regardless, he needed to make up his mind. Should he let Gi Go fight? Or should he forcefully stop him?

Gi Go was certainly fighting better today than ever, but despite that... When Yoshu looked to the yugushiva, he couldn't help but feel anxious.

The yugushiva bolted off again.

It's too dangerous!

The aura emanating from the yugushiva was abnormal. It felt sharp like a drawn sword. As a battle slave, Yoshu has clashed against countless enemies, from humans to monsters, and yet never before has he met someone who possessed an aura as terrifying as this.

"If I don't make a decision soon, I won't be able to anymore," Yoshu said to himself.

In the worst case, he would have to stop Gi Go against his will. Yoshu braced himself to throw the throwing dagger hidden behind his shield.

He can't let him die here. He couldn't die here either. Both he and Gi Go had a place they had to return to.

Yoshu apologized to Gi Go in his heart as he eyed the Yugushiva.

The yugushiva was running around Gi Go, but just a little, he glanced at Yoshu. It was just for a moment, but the yugushiva was clearly aware of Yoshu as he ran in zigzag toward Gi Go.

When Yoshu saw that, he clicked his tongue and approached him.

The agile yugushiva moved around as if to avert Yoshu's aim. It would not be easy to hit him.

Meanwhile, Gi Go seemed to have closed his eyes even as the yugushiva approached.

The atmosphere was tense, so tense that Yoshu forgot to breathe as he watched the enemy near Gi Go.

But then... the moment the yugushiva came into Gi Go's range, like an oil spring lit, Gi Go erupted, bellowing out a powerful howl.

"GURUUuaAAAA!"

"RUuuaAAAli!"

The yugushiva bellowed back against Gi Go as he swung down his curved sword.

Sparks erupted as two curved swords and two spirits clashed. Gi Go's curved sword that was hidden behind him pierced through the stirred up snow, parrying the yugushiva's curved sword up above his head. At the same time, the yugushiva stepped into the snow and brought its deflected sword back down onto Gi Go's head.

But Gi Go had already taken back his sword, allowing him to block the yugushiva's slash. The experience Gi Go had accumulated until now was responding to the standards of the sword god.

From defense Gi Go smoothly moved to offense. After having blocked the enemy's sword, the enemy had gotten much slower, allowing him to ignore it as he held his curved sword in a reverse grip and swung it at the enemy's neck. There should have been no room to escape to, but the enemy went beyond Gi Go's expectations.

The enemy quickly took back its sword with a sharpness and speed that excelled that of Gowen's, allowing it to deflect Gi Go's attack, then this time, it struck out its sword for Gi Go's neck.

The battle continued like this with both swordsmen dancing at the edge of death.

Gi Go and the yugushiva clashed swords over 20 times.

Until now Yoshu has never before seen anyone fight this long while standing point blank each other.

Consequently, because they were so close to each other, Yoshu couldn't find the opportunity to throw his dagger. He wanted to create an opening, but even that didn't seem possible.

When the dance finally ended, it was because the yugushiva jumped back.

Gi Go and the yugushiva had clashed swords at least 20 times, and though they were unable to land a fatal wound on each other, both parties were covered in small wounds.

Gi Go and the yugushiva gasped for breath, a cloud of white leaving their mouth as it faded behind them.

Yoshu was relieved to see Gi Go safe, and when he noted that the yugushiva was breathing heavily, he thought that the opportunity had finally come.

"Forgive me, Mr. Gi Go!"

As Yoshu uttered an apology, he threw away his shield and threw five daggers at the yugushiva.

"Yoshu!" Gi Go reprimanded Yoshu, but he could not stop him.

When the yugushiva noticed that an attack was coming, it tried to run away, but unfortunately, the snow had grasped its legs, leaving it unable to run.

Sensing that the yugushiva was panicking, Yoshu threw 5 more daggers. The yugushiva was tired, he had to strike now! He thought.

The yugushiva wasn't so soft as to lose to a long-ranged attack, however. Though the yugushiva had lost its posture, it still managed to recover in time and jump away, sweeping away the incoming daggers with a swing of its sword.

The yugushiva jumped back to get away from Yoshu, but when it landed its body shook. The yugushiva seemed to be in some sort of pain, but that was all the more reason for Yoshu to strike.

The yugushiva used its curved sword as a cane to keep its body up, letting it swing its sword again to deflect the wave of daggers, but one dagger still managed to graze its

legs, causing blood to spurt.

Now bleeding, the yugushiva's strength gradually drained.

After having to dodge five more daggers, the yugushiva's body shook as it relied on its sword as a cane. Its former strength was no longer there.

"You're too dangerous! You have to die!" Yoshu yelled as he threw one last set of daggers.

But just when he thought the enemy couldn't possibly dodge anymore, a sword swung, deflecting his thrown daggers.

The one who swung, however, was not the yugushiva, but Gi Go.

"Mr. Gi Go!? What are you—!?" Yoshu asked.

"Yoshu, that's enough!" Gi Go rebuked.

Gi Go could not deflect all of Yoshu's daggers while protecting the yugushiva, so he ended up getting hurt in the process.

"Nu..." Gi Go kept himself from groaning out in pain as he took out the daggers and threw them on the ground.

"That person is too dangerous!" Yoshu argued as he pushed away the snow and ran up to Gi Go.

But Gi Go didn't say anything and just looked toward the yugushiva.

"...If I let a female die, I wouldn't have any face left to show the king," Gi Go said.

"...Huh?" Yoshu asked.

When he looked at the yugushiva lying on the ground, it turned out to be a young woman.



Gi Go carried the yugushiva to the cave he and Yoshu stayed at before, then he had Yoshu begrudgingly treat the yugushiva. When he thought to step out for a walk, he came back with a snow lizard.

Gi Go proposed to take care of supper in hopes of quelling Yoshu's dissatisfaction.

"I tied her up well, so..." Yoshu said.

When Gi Go followed Yoshu's gaze to the yugushiva, he noted that the yugushiva had herbs and bandages properly applied on her. Yoshu had even prepared a proper place for her to rest, including a blanket. As far as 'tied up' went, Yoshu only tied up her hands with a rope.

"You're surprisingly kind," Gi Go remarked.

Yoshu sneered back. "She's unarmed and there's two of us, so I figured she wasn't much of a threat anymore."

Yoshu filled a pot with water and placed it atop the fire, then he took the snow lizard from Gi Go's hands and started preparing their supper.

One side of Gi Go's face lifted up as he faintly smiled.

His gaze was turned to the curved sword the yugushiva woman had used. It was not something suited for the slender hands of a woman.

Gradually, the time of the fire god neared its end, and the hour of the night god came.

Whenever night came Yoshu would teach Gi Go how to sing. He would sing once to show Gi Go, then Gi Go would try to mimic it, and Yoshu would point out whenever he made a mistake, then they would start all over again.

The night went on, but tonight the twin goddess moons showed themselves, weakening the goddess darkness' influence. The red moons dyed the snow in its hue as silence filled the north. But in that deathly silence was a soft singing sound resounding from one cave.

“Do you still remember our home land? Oh small winds of the sky, take these feelings with you (kylanmaroodo rinbaa. Raabekastoria, vesjiinichukeruu),” Gi Go sang in a low-pitched voice, causing Yoshu to burst out laughing as he pointed out Gi Go’s errors.

“Your pronunciation is a bit off. Listen... Do you still remember our home land? Oh winds of the great sky, take my feelings with you (kylanmaroruudo, riinbaaru. Haabekasutoria, vesjiinichiukeruu),” Yoshu said.

Gi Go nodded and tried again.

Gradually, the tune Gi Go sang became bearable enough to listen to. Yoshu nodded in satisfaction and smiled.

“Not bad. If you keep practicing, you might even become a minstrel one day,” Yoshu said.

“When that time comes, I’ll give your name whenever people asks me for my teacher,” Gi Go said.

“Please don’t. I wouldn’t want to be stoned,” Yoshu teased.

“I wonder what happened?” Gi Go said as he turned his gaze to the sleeping yugushiva and rubbed his chin. “I didn’t think the proud yugushiva would be a female. I wanted to win because I thought I was facing a strong male.”

“I don’t suppose it’s realistic to expect her to lead us to her village either. They don’t seem very friendly, what with attacking us out of the blue like that,” Yoshu said.

Yoshu sighed while Gi Go pondered.

Yoshu never really had much qualms about killing the yugushiva. As a battle slave, gender never really mattered. Whether it was a woman or a man, they would kill them all the same. The thought wouldn’t even cross them, in fact.

Unfortunately, Gi Go had already lost interest. Moreover, from the goblins’ perspective, the females were weak creatures that they had to protect at all costs. Of course, there were exceptions such as Princess Narsa, but they didn’t usually see them as someone to cross swords with.

—Maybe I should torture her after all to make her cough up some useful information.

Yoshu thought to himself as he watched the woman sleep, but then he noticed something unusual.

“Hmm?” Yoshu muttered.

When Yoshu was about to approach the woman, he noticed that her eyes were open wide.

“Rabaiyaru!? Gerunoia!” She cried in the northern language as she tried to sit up. When she realized that her hands were tied, a look of panic washed over her face. Immediately, she pushed aside the blanket and stood up, but a wave of dizziness hit her, forcing her back down onto her knees.

“It doesn’t seem to be a cold... But it has to be some sort of illness,” Yoshu remarked as he coldly watched the woman cough.

Yoshu lifted up his shield and glanced at Gi Go, seemingly asking him if they should fight or not, but in response, Gi Go only frowned for a moment before standing up and carelessly walking to the woman.

“Wait, Mr. Gi Go! It’s dangerous! She could bite!” Yoshu said.

“There’s nothing to worry,” Gi Go said.

The woman forcefully stopped her coughing as she growled at Gi Go, who was looking down at her.

It didn’t seem apparent back when they were fighting, but now that they were here in the cave, Gi Go could clearly be seen to be at least two heads bigger than her, her head reaching only up to Gi Go’s neck at most.

Gi Go reached out for the woman, but she ducked it, passing by him, only to cough again and stop in her tracks, leaving her defenseless as Gi Go caught her and threw her back into bed.

“Don’t move. You’ll shorten your life,” Gi Go curtly said as he went back to his seat next to Yoshu.

"I thought it was odd back then... I guess she really was sick. A pity, but if not for that, my head probably wouldn't be attached to my body anymore," Gi GO said.

The woman watched Gi Go and Yoshu cautiously for a little longer, but after awhile, she lost consciousness and went back to sleep.

Gi Go quietly tucked the woman into bed, ensuring that the blanket warmed her, then he went back to sit next to Yoshu.

"Can you treat her?" Gi Go asked.

"Do I look like a doctor to you?" Yoshu asked back.

He didn't bother asking what Gi Go would do if he did treat her. After all, Gi Go was simply the kind sort who would surely leave her alone afterwards.

As for Yoshu, he found it difficult to sleep knowing that someone who tried to kill them just moments ago was sleeping nearby, so he decided it would be best to get rid of her as soon as possible. In that way, he might be able to get his peaceful nights back.

"What herbs do you have?" Yoshu asked.

Gi Go showed him his stack, and Yoshu started picking out various herbs.



Yoshu sifted through various herbs, ground them into powder, mixing them with the evening primrose Gi Go gave him, then he dissolved the powder in hot water.

"This should do," Yoshu said.

It was a simple mixture he learned from a traveling doctor once upon a time, though he did add some primrose into the original formula.

"Drink up," Yoshu said as he poured the medicine into the sleeping yugushiva's mouth.

After he heaved a breath of relief, Gi Go called out to him.

“Can she be saved?” He asked.

“I don’t know, but the most we can do is to help stabilize her condition and then ensure she is fed well,” Yoshu said.

A safe answer so to speak. After that Yoshu moved away from the yugushiva woman.

“I see...” Gi Go said, falling into silence as he pondered for a moment, then he took his sword and headed out. “I’ll go hunt for a bit.”

“Take care,” Yoshu said.

Gi Go nodded, then his figure vanished into the snow field. When he came back he had a bird in his hands.

“Will this do?” Gi Go asked.

“More than,” Yoshu said.

Yoshu quickly prepared the bird, gutting out its innards, then washing it with water from melted snow, then cooking it quickly over fire.

When the bird had charred a little on the surface, Yoshu chopped it and served it with boiled herbs. He placed the yugushiva’s portion next to her.

“I’m sure she’ll eat when she gets hungry. It would be best to eat while hot though,” Yoshu said as he moved away from the yugushiva.

“Shall we?” Yoshu said to Gi Go.

Gi Go nodded, and the two of them began eating.

When night came they left the cave and practiced singing. When they came back the plate they left beside the yugushiva had been licked clean.

Yoshu wryly smiled as he took back the plate. This continued for six more days when the yugushiva was finally able to stand on her own.

“Feeling better?” Gi Go asked.

“...Food, thank you,” the yugushiva woman said in broken speech.

Gi Go and Yoshu glanced at each other at that.

“You know our tongue?” Yoshu asked.

“South, words, a little,” she said.

The yugushiva, who had her silver hair in a ponytail, bowed before Gi Go and Yoshu.

“I have, request,” she said.

“A request?” Yoshu asked.

The woman nodded. “Medicine, give. Save, tribe.”

Gi Go and Yoshu glanced at each other again.

“What miraculous medicine did you give her?” Gi Go asked with visible admiration.

Yoshu honestly shook his head to indicate she must’ve been mistaken. “It was just a simple medicine. You could find it any—”

Suddenly, realization struck Yoshu. He did add an extra ingredient, didn’t he?

“Could it be because of this?” Yoshu muttered to himself as he looked at the yet fresh evening primrose.

“Please, give, save, tribe!” The woman desperately pleaded as she prostrated herself before them, her head touching the ground.

“What do we do?” Yoshu asked.

“Give it. I can’t get sick anyway,” Gi Go reasoned.

“Hmm...”

After thinking for a while, Yoshu took the bag of herbs and gave it to the woman.

“Unfortunately, this is all I have. I’m not sure how big your tribe is, but it probably won’t be enough,” Yoshu said slowly to make it easier for the woman to understand.

A look of despair gradually covered the woman’s face.

“So, how about you take me and Mr. Gi Go to your village, then we could make more medicine there. How about it?” Yoshu suggested.

“Thank, you,” the woman said with much difficulty.

Yoshu wryly smiled.

“Did you catch my tendency for meddling with people?” Gi Go asked.

Yoshu scratched his head. “Umm... do you mind if we go?”

“Nah, let’s,” Gi Go smiled.

Yoshu narrowed his eyes.

INTERMISSION

THOUSAND LI TO THE NORTH, EMBRACE THE DAWN II

The yugushiva woman's name was Yustia.

The way she looked with the demon mask on made even Yoshu, who knew much about society, gulp.

The yugushiva had long silver hair that extended down to her waist. She quickly recovered after eating the food Gi Go had hunted.

The bright light of the sun illuminated the snowy lands as a cold breeze fluttered the yugushiva's silver hair.

As she felt the breath of the snow god on her cheeks, she turned to her benefactors.

"Village, here," she said.

Yustia pointed at a location between the valleys, where a village that looked almost as if it were buried in the snow was. If Yustia hadn't been with them, finding it would have surely been difficult.

Yustia led the pair of human and goblin to the biggest house.

Yoshu noted the children playing in the square. The game they played, however, was a duel of swords, a game which both young boys and girls played together. While some fought some jeered as they watched.

They were happy to see Yustia, but when they saw Yoshu and Gi Go – people they did not know – they pointed their swords at them.

"Kids playing with swords... I guess it's about what you'd expect from the yugushiva," Yoshu said.

"Hmm? But goblins are the same..." Gi Go said.

“It’s not normal for humans,” Yoshu pointed out.

“I see,” Gi Go nodded.

Gi Go and Yoshu talked nonchalantly despite having swords pointed at them. Meanwhile, Yustia told the children off in the northern language while she led Yoshu and Gi Go to the biggest house.

As they neared the house, a child ran into it. After which, a one-armed man in the prime of his life came out.

“Chief,” Yustia said. The words that came after that were all in the northern language.

She spoke to the chief about the matter of these people saving her as well as the medicine. She managed to let Gi Go and Yoshu understand what they were talking about through gestures.

The silver-haired man in the prime of his life made a difficult face. The wrinkles in between his brows deepened as the scars on his skin showed. There were few men in the world who fit the image of a veteran as much as he.

Yustia and the man she referred to as chief talked for a bit, then she went into the house with Gi Go and Yoshu.

“Medicine, please,” Yustia said.

Yustia led Gi Go and Yoshu into the big house and into what was probably a bedroom.

On the canopy bed laid a woman who looked just like Yustia.

“My mother,” Yustia said.

The woman on the bed took ragged breaths. As soon as she heard Yustia’s voice, her eyes opened, and she turned a gentle gaze at her, but that gentleness quickly vanished when she turned to Yoshu and Gi Go.

The woman forcefully stabilized her breath and raised up her body. It was a mystery whether she simply did this out of pride or because she couldn’t forgive outsiders.

Yustia took a step forward and spoke with her mother. Seeing that, Gi Go and Yoshu turned around to give them some space, but Yustia's mother called out to them.

"Get out of this village, you animals..." She said weakly in the southern tongue.

"You speak our tongue?" Yoshu asked.

Yustia's mother glared at them. "I have... married twice in my life. And both were killed by your people... I will never forgive you."

She spoke hatefully as tears flowed out of her eyes, then she turned her back on them. After that Yoshu and Gi Go exited the room to prepare the medicine, leaving Yustia to speak with her mother.

"Marriage, is that something important?" Gi Go asked.

"Well, some people see it as something sacred, so I guess it depends on the person. I've never been married and I don't particularly want to right now, so... I don't know," Yoshu said.

Gi Go and Yoshu chatted while the latter made the medicine. Gi Go, who came from Gi Village, found it difficult to understand what marriage was.

"In other words, it's to form a mate," Gi Go said.

"Well, yes. I mean it's natural to want to leave behind a descendant, right?" Yoshu said.

"I have only one body, and it belongs to none but I. I would say the same to others as well. What good is there in leaving behind one's own lineage?" Gi Go asked.

Hmm... Yoshu became thoughtful for a moment, then he thought of using Gi Go's king as an example.

"Well, what about your king then? Don't you think it would be bad if there was no one left to succeed him?" Yoshu asked.

"...The king's greatness has nothing to do with his blood or lineage. He is great because of his own abilities and achievements not because of his blood," Gi Go answered.

“Then what will happen to your kingdom when the king passes? Who will take the throne?” Yoshu asked.

“Another excellent individual obviously,” Gi Go said matter-of-factly.

Why do you say it as if it’s so obvious? Yoshu thought to himself. It was true that there was no guarantee to an excellent king’s descendant being as skilled as he, but it was human to hope such things. It was precisely because of that the human kingdoms have lasted as long as they have...

After mixing the medicine, Yoshu handed the medicine to Yustia. Apparently, several persons’ helping would be needed, so he decided to concoct some more.

With nothing to do, Gi Go decided to take a tour of the yugushiva village.

Gi Go walked to that square they passed by a while ago. The children from before were still playing.

When Gi Go saw that he approached them.

The children did not know him, so they pointed their swords at him.

“Hmm...”

In response, Gi Go drew his sword.

The younger of the children cowered when they saw his bared sword, but the slightly older kids took stance. They lowered their hips, ready to jump at a moment’s noticed.

“Good stance,” Gi Go said.

The children were probably playing, though, as they took whatever stance they felt like.

“Let me give you some pointers,” Gi Go said with a fierce smile as the children formed a semi-circle before him.

The younger children seemed to finally calmed down upon seeing the older of them

step out. They took stance as well and prepared to charge at Gi Go together.

The pressure they emanated was quite impressive considering they were children.

“IeeAaa!” One child cried out with fighting spirit as he charged at Gi Go, but Gi Go deflected his sword, sending it flying into the ground behind him. At the same time, Gi Go pointed his sword at him.

In the next moment, the children around Gi Go came charging too.

Gi Go deflected their swords one after another.

Some of the children were scared to death, some even cried... The crying children, Gi Go patted on the head to comfort them while he gave them back their swords, then he gestured to teach them that they should lower their hips more and faced their opponents straightforwardly. It took a while, but Gi Go managed to get his intentions across.

There was little fun to be had in the snow-caged village, so as soon as the children realized that Gi Go was no danger, their interests were piqued and they flocked around him like he was some sort of attraction.

Some found the color of his skin curious, while some tried pinching his hard skin, and others dangled from his great stature.

Gi Go had never seen so many human children before. The most he knew of were the few present in the Gi Village back when the humans still lived among them. Back then he also gave the willful children a few pointers.

Gi Go didn't know what to do with all the children, so he just let the flow take him and he played with them.

“Hmm,” Gi Go muttered to himself.

This is not how things were supposed to go, he thought, but in the end, he couldn't help but play with the children until sunset.

Gi Go went back a little exhausted to the chief's house.



Gi Go and Yoshu stayed in the yugushiva village for the next 10 days.

Yoshu's medicine gradually helped the village overcome the dark cloud of illnesses that covered it, illuminating a ray of hope into the village.

Yoshu concocted his medicine day after day, while Gi Go would go out to play with the children and hunt.

One day, Yustia's mother visited them.

"I'm sorry for my behavior the other day," she said while Yustia quietly kept her head bowed. It seems it was her mother that had business with them.

"Thank you for saving my tribe," Yustia's mother said. "I thought of giving you something as thanks in return, but this is a village out in the sticks, after all, so... If it's not too much trouble, may I first know what reason you came to this village?"

Gi Go and Yoshu glanced at each other. This woman's behavior had changed so suddenly, but no matter how much they looked at her face, it seemed just like a block of ice, emotionless and unchanging.

She must've come to ascertain our intentions, Yoshu thought as he answered her. "This person here is Mr. Gi Go. He is a swordsman who has traveled away from home to hone his skills."

Yoshu explained that they came here after hearing tales of the yugushiva's skill with the sword, and that they hoped to have a duel with one of their esteemed swordsmen.

A troubled look faintly surfaced on Yustia's mother. She turned to Yustia, but she was wholeheartedly looking at Gi Go and Yoshu.

Sighing, she spoke. "Our tribe is indeed better with the sword compared to the flatlanders of the south, but unfortunately, the men of our tribe have either passed or been gravely wounded. All that's left of our tribe now are children and women."

Indeed, whenever Gi Go took a walk around the village, he felt there was too many children compared to the men.

“But Ms. Yustia is—” Yoshu said.

“This girl is still a child. Someone who only knows how to flail about with brute strength isn’t an adult,” she said.

“Please let us think a bit,” Yoshu said.

Gi Go and Yoshu made a difficult face as they became thoughtful. Meanwhile, Yustia and her mother excused themselves.

“What should we do?” Yoshu asked.

Yoshu felt they were indirectly being asked to leave.

“If there’s nothing they can give us, we should go,” Gi Go said. “There might be something else to these lands, who knows.”

The two spent time gathering their thoughts, but in the end, they couldn’t come up with another answer.

The next day, they decided to leave and return to the king. Yoshu had always intended to return after a year and Gi Go himself would rather see the king again if he had nowhere else to go.

After preparing their luggage, the two immediately left the village. The village kids that Gi Go have been playing with all this time saw them off. The kids were in low spirits now that Gi Go was leaving, so Gi Go patted them each on the head before going his way.

After a day’s walk from the yugushiva village, Gi Go and Yoshu made camp along the path Yustia had taught them under the shade of a large tree. But just when Gi Go was about to go hunt as usual, a voice called out to him, stopping him in his tracks.

“Lord Gi Go!”

That was Yustia’s voice. As soon as Gi Go heard it, he left the thickets from which he hid, and waved at her. Like an arrow released, Yustia came running to Gi Go. She didn’t even have the yugushiva mask her tribe usually wore. She had only the white overcoat

on her body as she ran into Gi Go's arms.

"Sorry, sorry, mother, lied," Yustia apologized repeatedly in ragged breaths.

Gi Go thought it would be best to get Yoshu's advice, so he brought her to their camp for the time being.

As it turns out, Yustia's mother was telling only half the story. It was true that most of the men of their tribe had indeed died in the war last year, and that the strongest remaining in their village were either Yustia herself or her mother, but it was not true that they had no methods to help one train in the sword.

Yustia wanted to thank them for saving their village, a thought her mother sympathized with, but being unable to speak the southern tongue well, her mother proposed to be the ones to talk to Gi Go and Yoshu in her place. Naturally, being unskilled with the tongue, Yustia couldn't fully understand what they have been talking about, and so, she thought that her mother had properly explained, but when she heard from the children the afternoon yesterday that Gi Go and Yoshu had left, she approached her mother.

—"Why did you lie?" She asked with a fury like that of raging flames.

—"The secret methods of our tribe can't be leaked to outsiders!" Her mother reasoned.

—"It is disgraceful not to thank one's benefactors! Which do you think our ancestors would cry over more? Being unable to protect our secrets or leaving a debt unpaid!?" Yustia said back.

The argument between mother and daughter grew so heated that in the end they ended up drawing swords and the villagers had to step in to quell their fighting. After that Yustia fled her village and went after Gi Go.

"That was really reckless," Yoshu muttered.

"Lord Gi Go, want to be strong, there is place," Yustia said with her head deeply bowed.
"I guide you! Pay debt!"

"Thank you," Gi Go returned her deep bow.



Yustia led Gi Go and Yoshu to a snow cave two days away from the shade of the tree where they made camp.

The light outside reflected off the countless icicles within the cave, illuminating its interiors. It was a magical sight so breathtaking that Gi Go and Yoshu forget the cold for a moment.

“Alone, meet, god,” Yustia said.

The cave didn’t seem that deep. Gi Go did as Yustia instructed, and he entered the cave alone.

“Sing, songs. God, likes, songs,” Yustia said.

Gi Go never thought the songs he’d learned would be used this way, but he did as Yustia instructed and started singing.

“My dance, is the spark of blades, intoxicated by the moon. When I dance, the gods descend, and the evening birds cry forever in the night. (Baabaiyaado, baazarukushu, vadimaav. Paapaiyaaru, kaamuuru, janruuruu, Nuenakudooru.)”

Gi Go chose to sing a battle song.

He thought it would be most fitting considering where they were.

As he sung, countless magic formations of various geometrical shapes appeared beneath his feet, and then, his body vanished.

Gi Go found himself alone in the dark.

The weight of his curve sword sheathed by his waist and the sensation of his feet on the ground never left, but Gi Go’s body had definitely sank in the darkness.

A normal person would probably be in a panic after being thrown into the darkness all of the sudden, but an experienced warrior such as Gi Go calmly sat down and analyzed his current situation.

“Is this the trial of the yugushiva?” Gi Go muttered to himself.

A person who overcomes a trial will gain great power.

It was such a trial that the yugushiva referred to as their secret method.

“This sure is dark, though,” Gi Go muttered.

It was indeed dark considering he thought it dark despite having goblin eyes that could see in the night. After a while, a faint shadow appeared.

Gi Go concentrated his attention on his eyes to ensure that he wasn’t just seeing things. As he did that shadow sat in the same way he did.

“A trial, huh,” Gi Go muttered.

“Yes, a trial,” the shadow replied.

Not wanting to show timidity, Gi Go stood up, and the shadow stood at the same time. Gi Go and the shadow both drew their swords.

“So all I have to do is to cut you?” Gi Go asked.

“If you can, that is,” the shadow sneered.

There was no need for further talk. Gi Go grasped his drawn sword tight.

Gi Go leaped at the shadow.

The shadow leaped as well, and with the exact same timing, their swords clashed and locked.

Now point blank each other, Gi Go couldn’t help but note the face of this figure. When he did he was awestruck.

“Who are you!?” Gi Go asked.

That face was without a doubt the Goblin King’s.

But this figure was not the Goblin King but an imitator. For some reason, it had taken the exact figure of the king when he was still a duke class.

“I am the god within you,” the shadow said.

“Lies!” Gi Go spat.

Gi Go pushed against this mysterious foe once more, forcing a small opening, which he used to swing his curved sword. But the shadow easily deflected his sword.

“Come! Cut the god within you! Cut that thing which you believe in! Come! Come!” The shadow beckoned as he slashed at Gi Go repeatedly.

His sword was sharp and heavy. Gi Go could not relax for even a moment lest he wished to die. The pressure was overwhelming.

The shadow pressured Gi Go, closing the gap he’d forced open. Gi Go tried to fight back, but the shadow pushed his sword away and neared him. Being too near, Gi Go could not cut the shadow properly.

“Kul?” Gi Gu groaned.

“What’s wrong!? Weren’t you going to cut me!? Well, cut! Cut cut cut cut cut cut cut!!”

Again, Gi Go found his sword locked with this foe. He ignored the shadow’s words as he sought a path to victory.

—Cut, I have to cut it, but how!?

The enemy’s attacks were strong and unrelenting. If he let his guard down for even a moment, his head would surely be lopped off.

Somehow, he was able to keep the fight at a standstill, but Gi Go knew he was walking a thin line.

“You are not my king. I have only one king and he is in the south!” Gi Go said.

Fueled by rage, Gi Go slammed his fist at the shadow’s face, then with the opened distance, he swung his curved sword, but unfortunately, Gi Go hit nothing but the air.

He looked for the shadow.

“Ka ka ka ka ka!”

The shadow’s laughter resounded within the darkness, but it also echoed, making it difficult for Gi Go to pinpoint the shadow’s exact location.

Suddenly, Gi Go felt the back of his neck numb, so trusting his instincts, he immediately slid his body.

“Ke!”

As soon as he did, the shadow’s curved sword came thrusting from behind him, grazing his neck.

“OOoO!”

Gi Go turned his body and swung his sword at the shadow’s stretched arm, but the shadow managed to pull it back, leaving Gi Go with nothing to hit but the air. Regardless, Gi Go had managed to buy some time.

Gi Go fixed his stance and calculated the distance to the shadow, then he stepped forward and matched the timing of the shadow. Gi Go had his curved sword wielded by his side as he swung it against the shadow’s sword. As their swords clashed, Gi Go rammed his body into the shadow, hoping to send it flying, but his attempt was only met with an airy sensation. As it turns out, he could not even slam his body into the shadow.

“Ku!?” Gi Go groaned.

“What’s wrong!? What’s wrong!? Weren’t you going to cut me!? Well!? Cut me! Cut! Cut!” The shadow mocked him as it swung its sword.

When Gi Go blocked one attack, another would come from the opposite direction. Under the endless tempest of swords, Gi Go was left completely on the defensive.

This shadow was clearly more skilled at the sword.

The shadow's sword was like flowing water that never stopped like a waterfall.

Gi Go endured that onslaught of attacks as he pondered to himself.

Yustia told him before that the trial was a battle with one's self.

—Can I really cut this shadow?

This was not the king.

Gi Go knew that, but was this not the king within him? If so, would this not be the very incarnation of the king which he believed in? That very king who raised Gi Go from a simple goblin into who he was today? That benefactor who saved him and his tribe from starvation? That great king who holds such great ambitions as to dare fight the humans?

Yes, this was indeed the very king which he wished to serve.

Could he cut the king?

—No! He absolutely could not!

“Your sword is confused! Those whose path is uncertain deserve to die!” The shadow said as it rained sword after sword on Gi Go.

Somehow, Gi Go managed to fend the shadow off and take some distance.

“If I cut that which I believe in for what reason have I swung my sword?” Gi Go said, then he threw his curved sword behind him.

“Are you mad? You must be! Why else would you throw your sword!!” Furious, the shadow made a large overhead swing with its sword.

“My sword—”

The shadow's sword was clearly slower than before.

Gi Go caught the shadow's blade between his hands.

“—exists for the path I believe in!”

In the same moment Gi Go caught the shadow’s sword, he kicked the shadow away and its body vanished into the darkness.

Suddenly, the darkness faded and Yoshu and Yustia’s distant figures came to view.

As the darkness faded, the light of the moon reflected off the icicles within the cave, creating that same magical scenery he had seen awhile ago.

When Gi Go triumphantly smiled, he felt as if the shadow was laughing behind him.

After that Gi Go and Yoshu helped Yustia return to the yugushiva.

It wouldn’t be until a few days later when they would begin their journey back to to the king.



Level has risen.

2 => 96

Sword Mastery A- => Sword Mastery A+

Purple Flash

—Can cut magic.

Acumen

—Attacks seen once can be dodged. The effect varies depending on level and class. (TL Note: This used to be Forsake, but only because I didn’t really understand what it did. It is now Acumen as insight is already taken.)

Sense

—Focusing one’s spirit makes it possible to detect nearby enemies.

Discern

—The experience once has gathered will allow one to predict and dodge an enemy’s next attack.

A Swordsman's Proof

—Prevents confusion.

Silent Nature

—When fighting an enemy in a one-on-one duel, agility, concentration, strength, and ether are all increased.

The abnormal status, Sword God's Control, has been relieved.

The condition, Sword God's Blessing, has been added!

Due to the Sword God's Blessing:

—Sword skill is raised.

—The skill bonus will be applied even when using other types of swords.

—It is also now possible to use ether to sharpen one's sword.

CHAPTER 155

PARADISE IS A LONG WAY AWAY

Status	
Race	Goblin
Level	92
Class	King; Ruler
Possessed Skills	Ruler of the Demon Children of Chaos; Defiant Soul; World Devouring Howl; Sword Mastery A-; Dominator; King's Soul; Ruler's Wisdom III; Household of the Gods; One-Eyed Snake's Evil Eye; The King's Dance at the Edge of Death; Magic Manipulation; Soul of the Berserk King; Third Impact (The Third Chant); Warrior's Instinct; Blessing of the Underworld Goddess; Guided One
Divine Protection	Goddess of the Underworld (The goddess)
Attributes	Darkness; Death
Subordinate Beasts	High Kobold Hasu (Lv77); Gastra (Lv20); Cynthia (Lv1); Orc King (Bui) (Lv82)
Abnormal Status	Blessing of the One-Eyed Snake; Protection of the Twin-Headed Snake

There was only one month left until the war with the humans. Various weapons and armor have been prepared, and the goblin soldiers' training have been going smoothly. We've also managed to increase food production and have also began cultivating the red fruits which even the goblins should be able to eat.

Although goblin diet still largely revolved around meat, at the very least, we no longer relied solely on hunting.

There's not much that can be done about the goblins' taste, so I'll just have to order them to add fruits and grains to their diet.

Personally, I don't think they taste good either, but it's necessary, so I eat them anyway.

Naturally, I couldn't be the only one to eat only meat, so I had to start incorporating the new menu into my own diet first.

As a result, goblin diet gradually changed. It's not so easily accomplished, however, so we'll have to take things step by step.

As the day of war approached, I gathered the elven reinforcements and the demihumans to the frontlines, namely the ones that specialized in war, such as Mido of the Fang Tribe, Nikea of the Araneae, and Kerodotos of the minotaurs.

On the side of the elves, Fei, who has been going back and forth the village and me, arrived with Princess Shunaria, an old elven friend, and some familiar goblins.

"Long time no see, Your Majesty!" Leader of the druids, Gi Za Zakuend, said.

"It's been a while, Your Highness!" Kuzan, who had left for the elven school, said.

"Was it worth it?" I asked.

"Of course! I will definitely be of help to you, Your Majesty!" Gi Za said proudly with his arms folded.

"I have learned much about herbs, so just leave the wounded to me!" Kuzan said cheerfully as she jumped up and down.

I nodded. "Good, I'll be expecting much from you. But for now rest up. We'll talk after."

I called out to Gi Do Buruga, who was behind Gi Za. "You too, Gi Do."

"Thank you, Your Majesty," he said with an elegant bow.

His manners were so graceful that I went wide-eyed for a moment. Who would've thought a goblin could become so... graceful? It seems there really is a lot we have to learn from the elves.

Everyone came back better than before, but battle-wise, the one with the greatest results was none other than Cynthia.

A peek at her status through the one-eyed snake's evil eye showed just how much she

had grown. Moreover, because she was subordinated to me, I could see that some wolves were also subordinated to her.

She was also no longer an adult but a wild beast. I can’t imagine just how much blood she must have shed to grow so much...

“Father,” Cynthia said.

I was shocked, to say the least, but I didn’t forget to spoil her by rubbing her head. It seems she can now talk a little.

“Father,” Cynthia said again.

Unfortunately, the words she could speak were still too few. Regardless, it was clear that she enjoyed being rubbed. Her voice was still that of a little girl but the path she has walked was nothing to scoff at.

Status	
Name	Cynthia
Race	Gray Wolf; Pack Commander; Wolf King's Successor
Level	68
Class	
Possessed Skills	Raging Gale Strike; Charge; Great Blood; Howl of the Beast King; King of the Plains; Ferocious Fangs; Wise Wolf
Divine Protection	Goddess of Wisdom
Attributes	None;
Status	Subordinated to the Goblin King
Subordinate Beasts	Red Wolf; Earth Wolf; Savage Dog

The skill, Wise Wolf, must be what allows us to understand each other.

“Welcome back, Cynthia. I’m glad to see you.”

I caressed Cynthia as she snuggled up to me.

Spoiling her from time to time should be fine.



One month before the war with the humans, the people that left to scout: Shumea, Selena, Pale, and Felbi returned.

The information they came back with made me doubt my ears.

A great civil war had begun among the free cities, and the leading actors were none other than the followers of the Kushain faith.

Apparently, the Kushain adherents of the northern city state, Cultidian, rallied the adherents from the other city states and marched east.

Because everything had happened so suddenly, one of the eastern city states fell.

The war was led by the patriarch himself, who called the war a holy war.

“Did you catch the name of that patriarch?” I asked.

Shumea was the one to answer that question. “If I recall correctly, it should be Benem Nemush.”

He actually became patriarch? I suppose strange things do happen, but on the other hand, having things progress so well leaves me uneasy.

Regardless, with this, the public order of the southern part of Germion Kingdom should worsen, crippling their ability to support the west.

Germion Kingdom has no way of knowing how far that so-called holy war will spread, so they shouldn’t be able to spread the south thin. When it comes to religious wars like these, the more zealous the adherents, the fiercer the fires of war will burn.

I don’t think all the believers would be as passionate as that man, but the more aggressive they become, the more refugees and deaths there will be.

This is a good opportunity for us.

As I thought that to myself, I suggested that Pale and the others rest.

“Umm... Do you mind if I ask for a favor?” Pale asked apologetically.

Nodding, I had the others go ahead. “That’s rare, coming from you.”

From the way I saw it, Pale seemed to have resolved herself. She seemed particularly tense.

“Please let me go to the human world one more time,” Pale said.

“Why?” I asked.

Pale gulped as she hesitatingly answered. “...For private reasons.”

“That’s what I want to know,” I said.

Pale shut her mouth tight as if she had been hit.

I quietly waited for her answer.

“I was an adventurer before. My comrades from back then seems to have found themselves in trouble, so...” Pale said.

“We are about to go to war with the western feudal lord of Germion Kingdom. You do understand that we need every man we can get, right?” I said.

Pale quietly nodded, and I thought about her proposal.

“First of all, what exactly do you want to do about these comrades of yours? Do you want to save them? If so, what will you do after you save them?” I asked.

Pale might be blind now, but I’m sure with her skills, she could still manage as an adventurer. According to Shumea, her blindness wasn’t really much of a deterrent.

“I would like to save them if I could,” Pale said.

“Go if you must, but I hope you’re not planning on going against us,” I said.

“But of course!” Pale said.

When she said ‘favor’, she was probably referring to Selena. I’m not keen on sending Pale out alone, but it can’t be helped.

It doesn’t seem like she’s just running away, though. After all, she could have just left without saying anything.

“Nothing bad will happen to Selena. Go in peace,” I said.

“Thank you,” Pale said.

Like that Pale left, and I went to where Selena and the others were.

Pale isn’t going to be around, so it seems I will have to rethink my plans.



“In 20 days, we shall march our forces into human territory.”

The gathered people stirred. That included the noble and duke class goblins, as well as the orc king, Bui, the elves, and the various demihumans.

The gathered people looked at each other, then they looked up to the heavens.

When things began to settle down, I spoke. “I’m thinking of splitting our forces into 2 main groups. One group to surround the colonial city and another to deal with the enemy reinforcements.”

Normally, we would move together, but without any siege weapons, we can’t really attack the colonial city effectively.

With high walls occupied by archers and deep moats below which are beds of swords, it’s simply too difficult to fight a straight-up battle. And even if we do try to force our way through, losing too many men will leave us too weak to stabilize the city. Worse, the reinforcements might end up just sweeping the floor with us altogether.

Fighting a battle with exhausted warriors against a group of vengeful humans is a situation I really don’t want to imagine.

My end goal is to defeat the humans and create my own kingdom. My first step

towards that goal is to defeat the western feudal lord and take his territory.

That being the case, the lifeline of the western region is not actually the colonial city itself, which is essentially a vanguard, but the western capital, their home base. The fall of the colonial city would mean little so long as the western capital is able to continue sending forces. They would just rebuild it as many times as they need. On the other hand, if I could destroy the west capital, supporting the colonial city would become a difficult endeavor, not just supply-wise but also in terms of morale.

Morale isn't an easy thing to keep up during extended periods of battle.

When people don't know when help is going to come, everyone is starving, and friends are hurt, the only thing that can really keep people together is hope for reinforcements. Without that hope the only thing left is defeat.

"...Are we only going to ignore the enemy in front of us?" The Orc King, Bui, asked in that unchanging timid fashion of his.

"We will be surrounding the colonial city to seal their movements. If the opportunity to destroy it presents itself, then by all means," I said.

That being said, we would have to attack to some extent. We can't just surround the colonial city and stare at them like scarecrows.

After all, we need to live up to our reputation as monsters. The more fearful and panicked they become, the quicker they will call for help.

We'll try to limit our casualties as much as possible, but zero is impossible.

"The force that will be surrounding the colonial city will be led by Ra Gilmi Fishiga of the Ganra Tribe. Within the same force, Gi Gi Orudo will be leading the beast army; and then the araneae, the minotaurs, the tarpidae, the rizalat, and the papirsag along with the orc forces," I said.

The force surrounding the colonial city will strike fear into the enemy while attacking them from a distance. There will also be a support team to distribute supplies. Frankly, it would be ideal if I could get Ganra and the beast army to break through, but unfortunately, the circumstances won't permit it.

The mad lion, Gi Zu Ruo, has yet to return, so I'm unable to incorporate him into this force.

"Gi Gu Verbena will be leading the vanguard against the enemy's main forces," I said.

That is the reward I promised him for gathering the most subordinates among the goblins I've sent out. This honor is his.

"Our main force will have Gi Jii Yubu's army, Gi Za Zakuend's Druids, and the Gaidga Tribe," I said.

Gi Jii Yubu's army has been trained well to adapt to unexpected situations. Although not yet completed, his army is one of the few forces that actually act like an army as opposed to a horde. It would be a waste not to have them be a part of the main force.

The druids too. Magic is too great of a trump card to leave unused.

As for the Gaidga, they're a tribe that specializes in brute force, so naturally they'll be added too.

"The mobile unit will be handled by the Paradua Tribe, the centaurs, and the fang tribe."

Naturally, it would be filled by those with the most mobility. That means the Paradua and their beast riders, the gray wolves and the werewolves, and the centaurs who make a living running through the plains.

"The rear guard will be filled by the elves, Gi Ga Rax's imperial guards, and my own platoon."

When worse comes to worse, the deciding pieces will be the 'wounded ones' who are more persistent than any other. I will be leading them personally as I want to decide when to send them.

"Gi Jii Arsil's unit will be working alongside the harpies for reconnaissance."

The reconnaissance mission, which has the greatest influence on the battle, will be handled by Gi Ji and Yushika. They will be ascertaining the enemy position from the sky and from the ground.

This is the formation I came up with that allows us to exhibit our mobility even while prioritizing damage.

There wasn't anyone who excelled in defense, so I decided to just give the iron equipment to the vanguard.

"Our path to world domination begins with this war. Let the proud humans know the might and fury of our blades!"

With this our course has largely been decided. All that's left now is to deal with the small details, such as the timing of the surround, when to break through the humans' main force, and deciding the routes we will be taking up to the western capital.

The old goblin, Kuzan, and Yellow are in charge of dealing with the reserve force and those that will be left behind.

All the big players will be coming out in this battle.

We will use all the power of the Forest of Darkness to deal a mighty blow to the humans.



The goblins within the Fortress of the Abyss were as busy as bees due to the coming war. Of the busied people in the fortress, one person was on her way away. It was none other than Pale.

She hadn't said goodbye to anyone even Selena.

"Are you going?" Felbi asked.

The only one sending her off was her comrade in arms, Felbi.

"Sorry. I'm not scared that the elves have chosen to walk with the goblins. It's just that..." Pale said.

"I know. There are things we can't abandon. Even if we want to, it's not easy," Felbi wryly smiled.

He looked young on the surface, but he had already put on many years.

He rarely showed this side to him.

In response, Pale looked down on the ground. "Felbi, I..."

"You don't have to say anything," Felbi said. "Even if you worry, no one's going to die."

All of the sudden, Felbi was back to that jovial attitude of his, keeping Pale from saying anything more.

"The problem with you is you're too serious," Felbi said. "You should live more selfishly from time to time. No one would blame you."

"Felbi..." Pale said.

"Live as you wish, Pale. That's why you left in the first place, right? When you come back, we'll accept you, and even if you end up fighting against us, I won't blame you. That's what veraltas (comrade in arms) are for, right?" Felbi said.

Right, Pale said as a tear leaked from her closed eyes.

"Thank you, Veralta (Comrade in arms)," Pale said.

"Don't call me that right to my face. It's embarrassing!" Felbi scratched his head.

Pale bid farewell to Felbi.



Within the morning haze surrounding the Fortress of the Abyss was the mighty coalition army consisting of the goblins, the demihumans, and the elves.

There were 10 days left until the appointed day of the Goblin King. They would have to send an advance party to begin the war, so considering the time, they had no other opportunity to meet up together except for this.

A large black body with a lone horn on his head reaching for the heavens and a tail

that slammed against the ground... On his body, he wore a set of leather armor and an overcoat made from the pelt of a red-speckled bear. Two great swords were sheathed by his waist. He seemed to be the very embodiment of power.

On his right arm was a symbol of a coiled snake blacker than the tone of his skin, and on his left hand was the blessing he received from the twin-headed snake. His features were miles away compared to any goblin.

That goblin climbed up a hill, and with his red eyes, looked down beneath him.

“On this fated day, we shall change history!”

At his voice, the heavens trembled and the earth quivered. His majestic presence bore so strongly upon the goblins that they were forced to kneel.

His voice was like the very act of rebellion against the heavens itself. The Goblin King bellowed at the morning sky.

“You who have lost your homes to the humans!”

The demihumans looked zealously at the king.

“You who have lost the war for supremacy!”

The elves clenched their fists.

“You who have been hunted as monsters!”

The goblins could not contain their emotions as they waited for the king’s words.

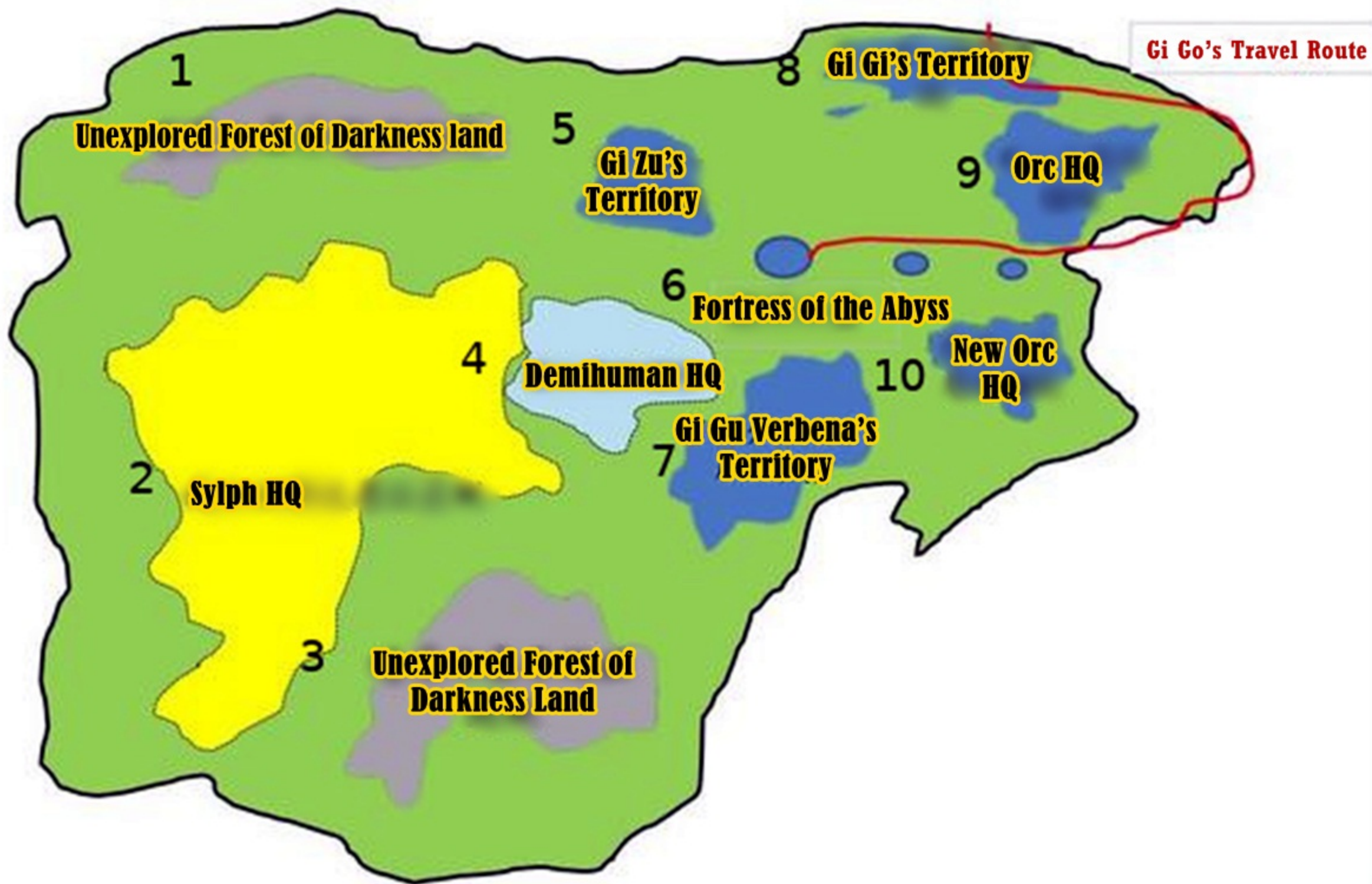
“Our paradise is a long way away. We cannot even see its silhouette, but... No matter how steep the path, one day, we will find it. To us godless ones (goblins), divine protections are worthless; therefore, without any prayer, with only the might of our unrelenting wills... we shall crush the human race!”

The Goblin King raised his fist toward the heavens.

“Defeated one! Let the proud humans taste our might!”

With a howl the whole forest shook.

Dark Forest Illustration



GOBLIN NAME CHEAT SHEET

[Goblin] Gi Ga

The goblin in that estranged group that was with the protagonist when he defeated an orc. He is currently a noble class, the highest amongst the protagonist's subordinates. He prefers to use the spear.

[Goblin] Gi Gu

The former leader of the village. He was pressured by the protagonist in his goblin noble form, and was added to his subordinates. He uses the long sword, and is relatively smart for a goblin rare. Became a goblin noble in chapter 39.

[Goblin] Gi Gi

Known as a beast warrior, a goblin with the ability to tame beasts.

He evolved while hunting spear deer with the protagonist.

He prefers to use the axe. His goblin class is rare.

[Goblin] Gi Go

A goblin with many wounds on his body. The food of his horde was stolen by the gray wolves, so he made a decision to follow the protagonist. He is the most experienced amongst the goblin rares. His weapon is a curved katana. He acts like a samurai.

Recently became a noble, and received the divine protection of the Sword God, Ra Baruza.

[Goblin] Gi Za

The druid goblin rare that recently joined them.

[Goblin] Gi Ji

A goblin rare. He evolved in chapter 37 after hunting with Gi Ga. He has the <> skill which makes him great for scouting.

[Goblin] Gi Do

Druid. Uses wind magic.

[Goblin] Gi Jii

Goblin Rare. From Gi Gu's Faction. He is known for his <> which allows him to see his

opponent's weakness.

[Goblin] Gi Da

Goblin Rare. From Gi Ga's faction. Notable skills are <> and <>.

[Goblin] Gi Zu.

Goblin Rare. The goblin favored by the Mad God (Zu Oru). Has the <> skill.

[Goblin] Gi Zo

Druid. Water magician.

[Goblin] Gi De

Beast tamer.

[Goblin] Aluhaliha

Leader of Paradua, one of the four goblin tribes and are known for their use of rider-beasts, which are essentially giant tigers.

[Goblin] Rashka

Leader of Gaidga, one of the four goblin tribes and are known for their valor and brutish strength.

[Goblin] Gilmi

Receiver of the title, The First Archer. He is the second in command in Ganra, one of the four tribes known for their rare ability amongst goblins to use bows.

[Goblin] Narsa

The Princess of Ganra. She is the only female goblin rare introduced so far.

[Goblin] Yellow

From Gordob tribe. He is the father of their priestess.

Other Characters

Humans

Reshia Fel Zeal (17 years-old)

The priestess known as the saint. As the Healing Goddess' follower, she lives to spread

the word and teach righteousness. She has the divine protection of the goddess, and can heal others.

Lili (21 years-old)

She studied the famous sword style, Zweil Style, in the capital. She has sworn fealty to Reshia. And while she may have lost to the protagonist in one hit, she has proven herself strong enough to easily defeat three normal goblins.

Mattis (26 years-old)

The second son of a farmer. He's largely responsible for drying the meat to preserve them.

Chinos (24 years-old)

The third son of a farmer. He plows the fields and is close to Mattis.

Keifel (28 years-old)

An adventurer who took on a request to escort Reshia through the Forest of Darkness. He's strong enough that he could easily wield a steel great sword, but the protagonist still managed to kill him.

Zeon (32 years-old)

A follower of Ativ. He specializes in fire magic. In his battle against the protagonist, he used his fire magic, but still lost. In the end, he tried to blow himself up along with the protagonist, but the protagonist's words agitated him, causing him to lose the opportunity.

Tinra (23 years-old)

A villager. She is one of the women used by the goblins as a breeding machine that the protagonist killed.

Ashtal Do Germion (59 years-old)

The king that rules the western region of the continent in which the Forest of Darkness and the connecting borders are included. He is a powerful ruler with seven holy knights under him. He has recently ordered three of those holy knights to search for the saint.

Gowen Ranid (45 years-old)

The feudal lord that rules over the region next to the Forest of Darkness. As one of the country's strongest powers, he is renowned as the Iron-Armed Knight. He is currently

leading his soldiers in a quest to find the saint.

Gulland Rifenin (31 years-old)

A former adventurer. As one of the country's strongest powers, he is renowned as the Storm Knight. He'd been stationed in the northern mountains, but the king called him back to send him off in a quest for the saint.

Gene Marlon (24 years-old)

As one of the country's strongest powers, he is renowned as Lightning-Fast Knight. He was previously stationed at the south, but the king called him back to send him on a quest to search for the saint. Killing is his favorite past-time. Whether it's a man, a demihuman or a monster, they're all just pieces of meat to be cut down before him.

Herculean Wyatt (40 years-old)

A member of the Blood Oath of the Flying Swallow. He specializes in handling great shields. He has a gentle personality, but beware for his anger isn't one to be taken lightly.

Mage Killer Mill (19 years-old)

A member of the Blood Oath of the Flying Swallow. She is an assassin that favors the use of talons. Renowned as the mage killer, she is a mage's worst nightmare.

Wand of Destruction Bellan (37 years-old)

A member of the Blood Oath of the Flying Swallow. He wields a fire staff. As a former knight, he cares a great deal about honor.

Hawk-Eyed Fick (31 years-old)

An adventurer with two names. He has exceptional perception and skill. He is currently searching through the Forest of Darkness under Gulland's lead.

The White Hand of Life (Previously translated as divine hands) (Age Unknown)

A priest robed in white. She specializes in healing and support. Her age, name, and origin are all unknown.

Vitz (25 years-old)

A talkative sword-wielding adventurer. He's actual strength isn't bad, but he's still far from being deserving of a second name.

Yugil (26 years-old)

An adventurer and an unwilling shield bearer. He might appear old, but he is actually still young.

Yoshu (26 years-old)

The younger brother of the slaves Gene purchased. The collar of obedience around his neck keeps him from going against Gene's orders. Healers are rare, so he's been made into a shield bearer.

Shumea (28 years-old)

The older sister of the slaves Gene purchased. The collar of obedience around her neck keeps her from going against Gene's orders. Contrast to her brother who bears a shield, she uses a spear.

Household of the Gods

The goddess.

The Goddess of the Underworld and the Goddess of Valor. As the goddess the snakes serve, she has given her blessing to the protagonist. She is a dangerous woman with her deep jealousy and fierce temperament.

Zenobia

The Goddess of Healing. She has given her blessing to Reshia. She has also warned the protagonist to protect her. The goddess might hate her, but she doesn't feel the same way toward The goddess.

Pitch Black (Verid)

A one-eyed red-eyed snake that belongs to the Goddess of the Underworld.

Twin-Headed Snake

Known to the goblins as the Lord of Decay. He is one of the snakes that fought the world with the Goddess of the Underworld.

Others

Selena

The elven woman Gene purchased. She became a slave after running away from her tribe.

Hasu

A high kobold. She is one of the protagonist's pets.

The protagonist managed to tame her by giving her orc corps and other meat as bait. She is a fortuitous kobold who somehow managed to become the leader of her pack.

Cynthia

As the pup of the gray wolves, she has been given the elven name that means lady of the lake. Reshia, Lili, and other children and women are quite taken by her lovely fur.

Gastra

As the pup of the gray wolves, he has been given the name of a wise human monarch that means sovereign of the wind's howls. His uninhibited personality leads him to battle Hasu for ranks on a daily basis.

Bui

A timid orc. Gol Gol had taken a liking for him despite his small body. After Gol Gol died, he led the orcs to the west, but the protagonist managed to capture them.

Gol Gol

The orc king that attacked the village. He is a berserker who can use skills. He was defeated by the protagonist.



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